

ONE SHILLING NET

BER-AMMERGAU  
AND THE  
PASSION PLAY.

By  
Hermitage Day

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OBER-AMMERGAU AND THE  
PASSION PLAY



# Ober-Ammergau and the Passion Play

A PRACTICAL AND HISTORICAL  
HANDBOOK FOR VISITORS

BY THE REV.  
E. HERMITAGE DAY, D.D., F.S.A.

*WITH 24 ILLUSTRATIONS*



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# Ober-Ammergau and the Passion Play



## I

### The Story of the Passion Play

THROUGHOUT the Middle Ages the religious drama was in Germany, as in England, exceedingly popular. It followed in both countries the same general line of development, and for an account of its origin, rise, and decay, the reader may be referred to the final chapter of this book.

Where the Reformation triumphed in Germany it involved, as in England, the extinction of the religious play.

Decay of  
religious drama  
in Germany.

The religious drama was unable to adapt itself to the altered conditions, and to this, rather than to any active measures of suppression, its decay was due. The Lutheran leaders had no prejudice against it: Luther himself sanctioned Mysteries, and assisted in their

production, and Archbishop Petersen, the founder of the Lutherans in Sweden, followed his example. Dramas were written by the so-called Bishops of the Lutheran community in Denmark so late as the end of the seventeenth century. But in the German States which declared themselves Protestant, the Mysteries soon declined. It was otherwise in the kingdoms which remained Catholic. There the Mysteries were retained, with other customs and traditions of long standing. They had had a long and honourable history in Germany: they con-sorted well with the genius and even the language of the Teutonic race, and they continued to evoke the enthusiasm and devo-tion of the people.

So early as the ninth century, as Canon MacColl records, Hrotsvitha, Abbess of Gandesheim, had written plays for the edification of her nuns, some of which are still extant in manuscript. The plays found a wider audience than the inmates of the nunnery, and were translated from the Latin in which they had been composed into the vernacular. From the cloister they descended to the street and the market-place, achieving a popularity similar to that which such plays were then winning in England. They were expanded to considerable length, some of

The earlier German religious plays.

them taking several days to act, and they were presented with great realism. And when the wars of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries brought desolation to the fertile plains of Germany, the plays which had made their home among the mountains lingered on unmolested, secure in their safe retreats.

Such a play was that of Ober-Ammergau. History does not record when it took its origin. But so early as the

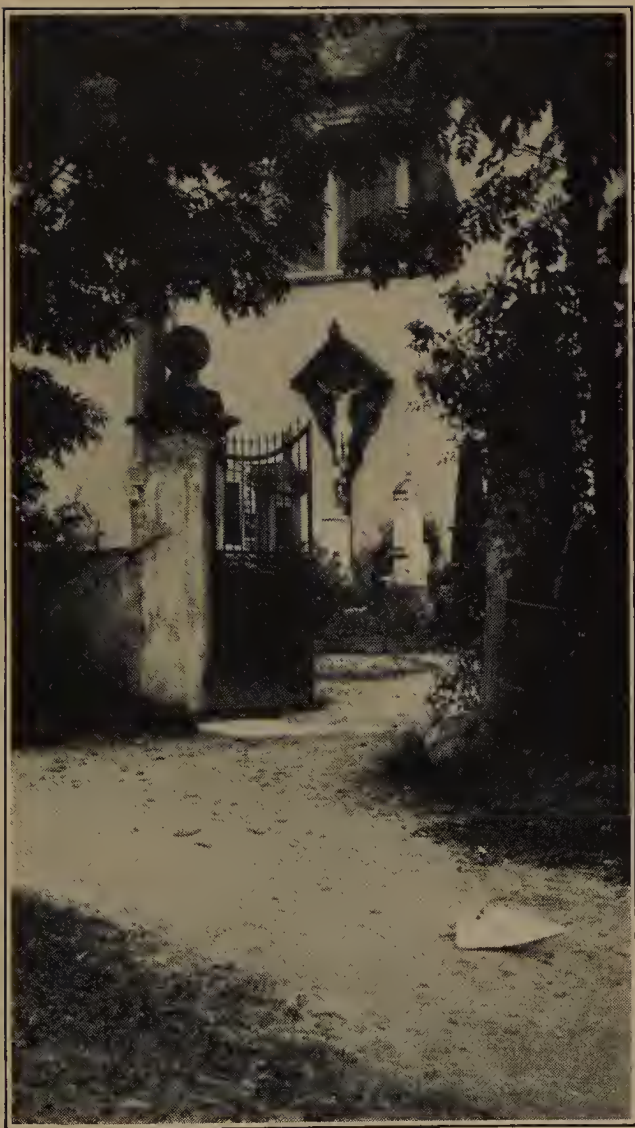
Earliest record of  
the Passion Play.

fourteenth century it was being acted under the guidance of the priests of Rottenbuch, a collegiate church twelve miles or so to the north-west of Ober-Ammergau which supplied priests to the two villages of Unter- and Ober-Ammergau, and exercised feudal authority over the Ammerthal. In 1330 the Benedictine house of Ettal was founded by Ludwig of Bavaria, German Emperor, who deposited there the image which remains over the altar to this day, an image which he was asserted to have received miraculously at Milan. So soon as the abbey was firmly established it seems to have taken over the supervision of the Ober-Ammergau Plays, being only a league distant from the village.

Down to the middle of the seventeenth century the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play probably had little to distinguish it from

plays of a similar kind. But it would be natural to suppose that it always exhibited a certain artistic superiority and dignity, since the people of Ober-Ammergau had for centuries followed the art of wood-carving, and their patrons of Rottenbuch and Ettal were renowned respectively for music and learning. But in 1633 the event happened which established the Play upon a new basis. The Bavarian Highlands were swept in that year by one of the virulent epidemics which were so frequent and so fatal, even in country places, in those days of poverty and disregard of sanitary conditions. In Ober-Ammergau alone was there health and safety, and to protect themselves the people of the village drew a cordon of sentinels round the place, that no one might enter to bring the infection.

Their precaution was in vain. A native of Ober-Ammergau, Gaspar Schisler—the name is still found in the village—yearning to see his wife and family, came back over the mountains from Eschenlohe, where he had been harvesting, and eluded in the darkness of night the vigilance of the sentinels. The seeds of death were in him: no sooner had he reached the village than he died, and in a few weeks nearly a hundred of the villagers had fallen victims to the plague. Those who



ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCHYARD.

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remained met together, and made a solemn vow before GOD that if the plague were taken away they would enact their Play of the Passion of the Redeemer every ten years with the utmost skill and devotion of which they were capable. Their vow was heard, and the plague was stayed.

So runs the story, in which—as Newman wrote of another and more notable legend—there is nothing which will be unwelcome or difficult to piety. Certain it is that the Play has been faithfully performed from that day to this; always, one may believe, with sincere devotion, in later times with ever-increasing skill and art. The Passion Play was first performed in accordance with the vow in 1634, it was transferred to the decennial periods in 1680.

There have been times when it seemed likely that the discharge of the obligation would be forcibly prevented.

The Passion Play  
threatened,

In 1780, as Canon MacColl records, a movement was afoot to put down plays of the kind, but the inhabitants of Ober-Ammergau received from the Churfürst Karl Theodore special permission to continue the representation of their Passion Play. In 1790 this permission was renewed, though all similar representations elsewhere in Bavaria were forbidden, partly on the ground of their

interference, alleged or true, with industry, and partly for reasons connected with religion and morals. In 1810 another attempt was made by the authorities to suppress all religious plays, and this time no exception was mentioned in the case of Ober-Ammergau. The villagers sent a deputation to Munich to plead the case of their Passion Play before the ecclesiastical authorities, but in vain. They then addressed themselves to the king's chaplain, Anton Sambuga, and he succeeded in obtaining for them the royal sanction for its continuance.

Besides the attempts to suppress the Play, the actual performance has been interrupted and sometimes on two occasions. In 1800 the Play was made to cease interrupted. at the beginning of July by the occupation of the village by a regiment of Austrian troops, who were posted there to hold the Ammerthal road, which happened to be of strategical importance. The French appeared in superior force, and posted their artillery on the slope of the little Osterbichl hill, where now the great marble crucifix stands, and from there they shelled and took the village. The event was an incident in the campaign which placed Bavaria at the feet of Napoleon, and enabled him to impose his will and policy upon it. The suppression of religious houses

was part of that policy, and both Rottenbuch and Ettal were dissolved in 1803.

In 1870 the Play had been prepared and five performances given, when the war broke out between France and Germany, and several of those who were taking parts in the Play were summoned to join their regiments. Among them was Josef Mayr, then a young man taking for the first time the part of CHRIST, and by special favour of the king he was assigned duties in the garrison of Munich during the war. At the conclusion of the war in 1871 the representations were resumed, with the special intention of thanking GOD for the victory of the German arms, and the bestowal of the blessings of peace.

It is from the last serious attempt to suppress the Passion Play that the beginning of its modern development and its growth to its present perfection is to be dated.

Its development to the present form.

During the decade 1810-1820, Rochus Dedler was composing the music which so finely emphasizes the teaching of the Play, and indeed seems to present the whole genius and spirit of the Play. In 1830 the parish priest of the village forbade the Play to be acted any more in the churchyard, since the grave crosses not only hindered the performers, but were sometimes broken by the

crowd. This prohibition necessitated the removal of the Play to a stage elsewhere, on which the Play could be presented much more worthily. In 1850 the present text of the Play, the outcome of the diligent and learned labour of Father Daisenberger, was used for the first time. Since then minor alterations have been made, each tending to make the Play more worthy of its great theme.

The suppression of the devils who used in the older versions to interrupt the Prologue, with the expressed intention of diverting the minds of the spectators from that tragedy which overthrew the powers of evil, and who gave visible shape to the doom of the betrayer, the omission of the actual suicide of Judas, the abandonment of the attempt to represent the sweat of the Agony, the curtailment of the scenes after the Resurrection, are examples of successive emendations, undertaken in obedience to the dictates of a truer taste and a finer feeling. So almost perfect had the Play become in 1890 that it was difficult to think in what respect it might be bettered. The Resurrection scene, in which CHRIST was represented as emerging from the tomb *after* the stone had been rolled away, was the only one which seemed to admit of improvement, and this, though it might have



THE FOUNTAIN AT THE MIDDLE OF THE VILLAGE,  
WITH THE KOFEL.

*[To face p. 8.]*



been easy to arrange in a theatre artificially lighted, would perhaps be difficult to manage in the open-air theatre of Ober-Ammergau.

So long as the Passion Play endures it will preserve the memory of three remarkable men, to whom it owes its present form, Ottmar Weiss, Rochus Dedler, and Anton Alois Daisenberger.

The first of these, Dr. Ottmar Weiss, was a Benedictine of Ettal, and became at the dissolution of his monastery the parish priest of Jese-  
wang. He was no commonplace monk of the time, acquiescing in monastic routine while it lasted, and falling a prey to regret and sloth when the dissolution came. He was a man of strong will and wonderful energy, who had seized upon some of the more worthy ideals of that age of unrest, and had made them his own, and who looked forward with hope to that golden age of liberty and learning which so many thought then to be dawning. It was Ottmar Weiss who persuaded the Ober-Ammergauers to abandon the old rhymed version of the Play in favour of a prose version following closely the very words of the Holy Gospels. To Weiss also is due the credit for the introduction of the tableaux. He saw that to give each incident in the Passion its due place and emphasis, it would be desirable to lead

up to it by the exhibition of its Old Testament type, which in its turn should be introduced by the Prologue-Declamator, and explained by the chorus. The new version was accepted by the village, and as it happened, most opportunely. For when the suppression of the Play was contemplated in 1810, they were able to plead that all that had been unworthy and trivial had been omitted from Weiss's version, and won by this argument the Archbishop of Munich was at last able to approve it, and to throw his influence on the side of the villagers and their Play. Ottmar Weiss died in 1843, at the age of seventy. He had lived long enough to see the Play in its new form securely established, and to know that his work was being carried on by his two pupils—Dedler and Daisenberger.

Rochus Dedler, himself an Ober-Ammergauer, as Weiss and Daisenberger were not, was born in 1779. While still a child he showed a considerable gift for music, and when the choirmasters of Rottenbuch came to see the Play in 1790, they took little Rochus back with them to be educated in the college. There he found shelter and peace during the years in which the Bavarian Tyrol was wasted by French and Austrian troops, and by the time that the Play was

next performed he had attained some skill as an executant and composer. The suppression of Rottenbuch, a year or two later, threw Dedler on the world, and he betook himself to Munich, where his opera "Regulus" was performed in the opera-house. But Munich was no place for the simple-hearted peasant; and weary of its intrigues and worldliness he gave up the chance of getting the post of organist in one of the chief churches, and came back to his native village as village schoolmaster, and precentor and organist of the church. He brought a wealth of love to his humble task, and the children in turn loved him, as one of them, then a very old woman, said in 1880, "as if he had been the heavenly FATHER Himself."

Dedler made an unhappy marriage, and domestic trouble threw him more and more upon his art for solace. When the version of Weiss was acted in 1811, Dedler wrote melodies for the simple verses explanatory of the tableaux, and the success of the new version led him to direct all his efforts to the composition of new music for the whole Play. Between 1814 and 1820 the score was completed, two songs alone remaining of his original composition. In the Play of 1820 he conducted his music, himself taking the bass solos. The strain and the exposure to the weather were the beginning of the illness

from which he died. In 1822 he wrote a Mass for the ordination of Daisenberger to the diaconate. Later in the year he went to stay with his brother Franz, now parish priest of Oberföhring, and there he slowly faded out of life. It is said that as his mind wandered in the last days of his illness, he would murmur the words of the Passion Play he loved so well, and this most often :

“The thorn-crowned One gives us His life as  
price  
(Since so the FATHER wills) as Sacrifice :  
Where shall we find a love that is  
To be compared with love like this ? ”

Daisenberger, the last of the three, was born at Oberau in 1798, and, coming under the notice of Weiss, was educated by him. He witnessed the Play for the first time in 1811, the Play of Weiss and Dedler. Soon after his ordination he became parish priest of Ober-Ammergau. He revised the text of the Passion Play for the performance of 1850. To him is due the present text of the beautiful prologues which explain so fully and exquisitely the action of the Play, and attune the minds of the spectators to the contemplation of the tableaux and scenes. To his influence must be attributed the progress of the Play towards perfection, by the



OBER-AMMERGAU, FROM THE OSTERBICHL.

[To face p. 12.]



gradual elimination of all that was weak and unworthy.

He was well fitted for the task. He was a man of devout soul, and on the literary side he was qualified by a wide acquaintance with the classical drama. For the practice of the villagers he wrote several other little plays, both religious and secular. He lived in the village till 1882, during his later years as a simple priest, relieved of responsibility for the parish. By the people of the place he was trusted, loved, venerated as priest and teacher, and by the King he was honoured with the title of Geistlicher Rath. He sleeps beneath the shadow of the church which he served so long, in the midst of the people who gratefully remember his service to them and their Play. His spirit is expressed in some words of the preface which he prefixed to an account of his parish, published in 1879 :—

“ May strangers who come here to the Holy Play, become more closely acquainted and in closer friendship with Ober-Ammergau through the perusal of these pages, and also oftentimes after their return to their homes renew within themselves the memory of this still, mountain valley.

“ And you, beloved community and fellow-parishioners, may you through the perusal of this book be strengthened anew in the attach-

ment to your birthplace, and in the resolve to resist carefully all which would tend to the hurt or dishonour of it, and ever faithfully to work together for everything whereby the well-being and good name of Ober-Ammergau shall be furthered, concord and unity steadfastly preserved in your dwellings, and whereby true Christian piety and morality shall blossom into ever fairer flower and fruit!

“And may you look upon this present description as a spiritual legacy, if I may say so, of your old friend, teacher, and pastor, and keep for him a friendly memory after his death!”



OBER-AMMERGAU, FROM THE OSTERBICHL.



II

## The Spirit of the Passion Play

IT need hardly be said that the strength of the Passion Play, the sole cause of its continued power to attract pilgrims to the little village in the Bavarian Highlands, lies in the spirit in which it is played. It is primarily the fulfilment of a religious vow, by which the entire community feels itself to be bound, "a religious duty from which they can neither be, nor do they wish to be, dispensed by any earthly authority." At the times when their Play has been threatened with suppression, the first anxiety of the villagers has been lest they should be prevented from fulfilling their vow. And even now, when the concourse of spectators is so great, and when what may be called the missionary or evangelical aspect of the representation has become so much more prominent, the objective aspect of the Play has not been lost sight of or obscured. The Ober-Ammergauers desire, first, to redeem their vow, to offer their Play as an act of worship to Almighty

GOD, and they would enact it with equal reverence and care if there were no spectators from the outside world. The words which the late Burgomaster Lang, to whom the village and the Play owed so much, spoken at the opening of the present theatre in October, 1889, indicate the spirit which still animates the people:—

“ If, at the close of the century, we again undertake the fulfilment of our fathers’ vow, who can blame us if we now give our Play the stamp of our own great epoch, so far as we may do so in consonance with the traditions handed down to us? But, however much we may be inclined to meet the wishes of the public, we do not desire to be betrayed by popular applause into opening the door wide to innovations. We wish to hold fast by the ideals which are at the foundation of the Passion Play. May the day never come when Ober-Ammergau will break with its traditions! May the old spirit, the spirit of our fathers, inspire us in this new house! ”

In accordance with this spirit the people of Ober-Ammergau have resisted, even with indignation, the offers of very large sums of money to take the Passion Play to Munich or Vienna. From time to time rumours are heard of their intention to perform the Passion Play elsewhere. No attention need be paid to them.



HERR PETER RENDL.

[To face p. 16.]



But, of course, the village cannot but feel that its Play is a power for edification.

Daisenberger on the power of the Passion Play.

Pastor Daisenberger expressed this feeling so long ago as 1870, when the Play was only just beginning to be known to the outer world, beyond the circle of its immediate neighbourhood. In a sermon preached on Whitsun Day in that year, he said :—

“You are called upon this year to take part in the fulfilment of a great and holy vow : you will, as it were, in some measure take part in the Apostolic office. From the Day of Pentecost the Apostles went into all lands to preach JESUS the Crucified, His doctrines and His deeds, His life and His death, His Resurrection and His Ascension, to show to men how ancient prophecies and the types of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Him. We are not now to go forth to the world to make known the Crucified, but thousands during this year will come to us, and ours will be the privilege to represent before them what the Apostles preached. If we work together with holy zeal worthily to represent these mysteries, then we may hope that with GOD’S grace great blessings may ensue. Many pious Christians, touched with emotion by the representation of their Saviour’s death, will return home edified and

strengthened in their faith and love, and with renewed resolutions to continue His faithful disciples. Many of the lukewarm and frivolous, unable to throw off the solemn impressions they have received, will, in future, show that the seeds of a more Christian life were sown here. And it may be that the sight of the Redeemer's great love for mankind, and of His bitter sufferings for their sins, may draw tears from the eyes of sinners, and these tears, aided by GOD'S good Spirit, may be the beginning of a sincere conversion, and this gazing on the Passion may be the way by which the Good Shepherd seeks and finds His lost sheep. But, dear friends, we can only hope for GOD'S blessing if we undertake our work with pure motives and holy zeal, and not with vain-glorious and selfish motives. If with the latter, GOD will look down upon us and on our work with displeasure, we shall be misusing and dishonouring the most sacred things, we shall reap to ourselves instead of honour, blame: instead of gain, most bitter loss. It is not our aim to shine in the art of acting—that would be presumptuous and ridiculous in simple country people; but it must be the most earnest desire of each one to try to represent worthily this most holy Mystery. . . . Let nothing go on either within or without the theatre, in the streets, in your



LITTLE OBER-AMMERGAUERS.

[To face p. 18.]



houses, or in the church, which can give occasion for offence. The eyes of many strangers will be fixed not only on the Play, but on ourselves. Let us so live that we may have nothing to fear from the all-searching eye of GOD, and the scrutinising gaze of our fellow-men. . . . Let us pray earnestly that the HOLY SPIRIT may assist us in the task that we have undertaken. May He ever be in us and with us. Amen."

The spirit of Daisenberger has continued to animate those who take part in the Play. This is the notice which was posted in the dressing-rooms of the theatre before the last performance of 1890:—

"The Passion Play for this century draws to a close, and GOD'S blessing has been visibly with us. Let us, therefore, offer to GOD our thanksgiving in this last representation, by striving to show forth with that earnestness and dignity of which the story is worthy the sufferings and death of our Divine LORD and Saviour."

No one is chosen for the principal parts upon whose character a breath of suspicion

The allotment  
of the parts. has passed. The parts are assigned by the votes of the

committee, and the unworthy have no chance, whatever their social position in the community, or their skill, may be. There is no jealous coveting of one part

above another. The decision of the voting is accepted bravely, though to one it may mean the disappointment of hopes cherished secretly and strongly, to another the relinquishment of a part which he has played many times, and to which he has given himself with self-sacrificing zeal and entire abandonment, and for which he has now grown, in the opinion of the authorities of the Play, too old. Each takes the part assigned to him, and does his best in it. The S. John of one decade may become the Judas of the next, Pilate may become S. Peter. Men who are especially respected are often chosen for the less desirable roles, as that of Judas, in order that no suspicion or slur may be incurred. Each does his or her very best; as Lady Burton has said, "The babe holding its skirt to catch the manna thinks that the whole Play depends upon its doing it well, and with devotion, and to please GOD. Every one is natural, there is no striving after effect, no one strives to shine, he does it as if he lived for that and nothing else. Thus it is a perfect whole, and this is the secret of the seven hundred people all doing a natural act of devotion at one and the same time, falling into perfect harmony."

The Play is their absorbing thought, their life. And one cannot but notice how their

faces—the faces of a peasant-folk not remarkable for physical beauty—assume the expression of those whom they so often represent, the strength and tenderness of S. John, the resignation of Our Lady, the self-sacrifice of CHRIST.

What is true of the spirit of the players, is true also of every detail of the representation. Dignity and simplicity are the keynote. Beauty is never wanting, nor, upon occasion, splendour. But there is

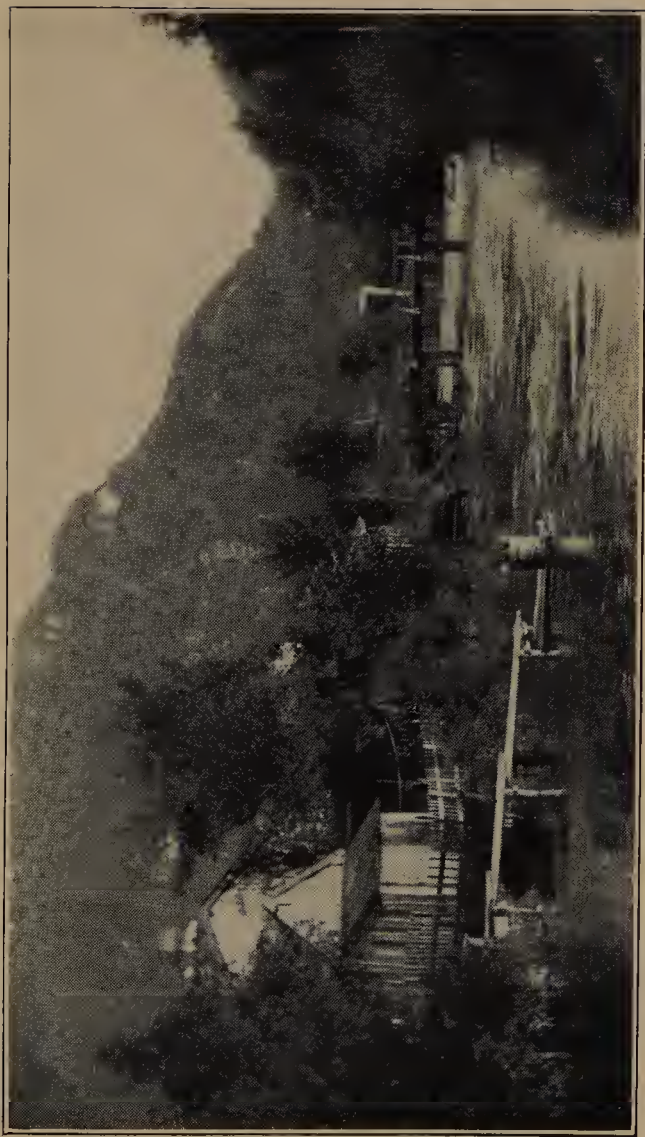
Dignity and restraint the spirit of the Play.

always restraint, that felt reserve of power which in every art is impressive and convincing. And the dignity of the Passion Play is due in great measure to its fidelity to the text of the Scriptures. Legend, however ancient, finds little place, almost the only exception to the rule is the introduction of the incident of S. Veronica in the procession to Calvary. The dialogue closely follows the words of the Gospels, the whole Play is steeped in its spirit. The spectator realizes, as the Play proceeds, what a marvellous commentary it offers; how plainly and with what convincing truth it exhibits character. The Baroness Tautphoeus, in the novel *Quits*, which was one of the earliest books to bring Ober-Ammergau to the notice of the world, has spoken of the impression which the Passion Play

left upon her heroine, and which it leaves upon most spectators:—

“She perceived instantly that what was thus before her would take the place of all the pictures and statues she had ever seen, and remain indelibly impressed upon her mind for ever. . . . Never did the eminence of CHRIST strike her so forcibly; or the worthlessness of mankind, and the ignoble actions which are the springs of their actions, become so glaringly apparent. . . . Nora forgot herself—time, place, spectators, everything, and saw, heard, felt, with a vividness that at length completely overwhelmed her. All that habit enables us to hear and read almost unmoved, and as a matter of history, was brought before Nora with a power perfectly irresistible.”

It is only natural that so great a power for good as the Passion Play should evoke the active hostility of evil. But **Malicious accusations.** all the accusations and innuendoes which have been brought against the villagers have met with the most complete disproof. Human, indeed, they are, and with human failings. But those who best know Ober-Ammergau testify that with all the temptation to gain which the Play affords, the villagers remain poor. The expense of presenting the Play on its present scale is enormous. The balance of



ON THE AMMER.

[To face p. 22.



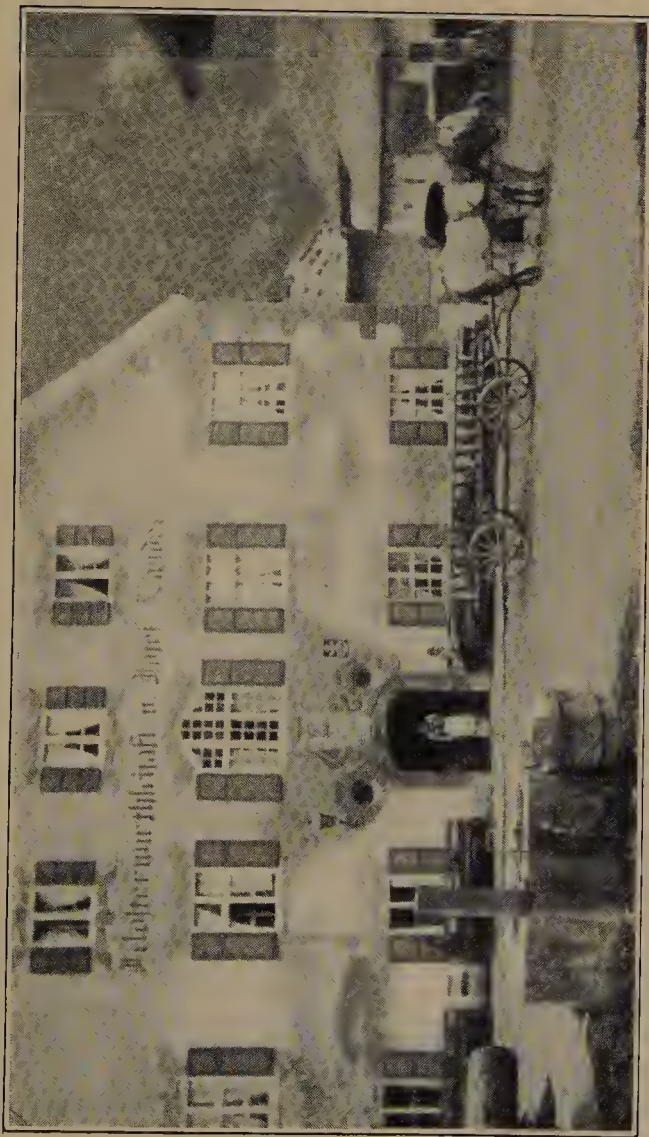
profit which remains when all expenses are paid is not large, and it is expended upon public works, such as the Ettal-Oberau road, the new theatre, the village hospital : on the salaries of the burgomaster, parish priest, schoolmaster, and other officials of the village commune, and in small sums ranging from a few pounds to a few shillings to each of the six or seven hundred people who take part in the Play, sums which scarcely compensate them for the time lost from their wood-carving and other occupations. Some of the more malicious rumours which were especially prevalent in 1890, were traced to disappointed Jew financiers, who had hoped to secure a share of the profits by financing the Play : others, no more excusable, have originated in English ignorance and prejudice. They have for the most part been silenced by the spread of knowledge.

### III

## The Approach to Ober-Ammergau

THERE are several ways of approaching Ober-Ammergau. The one most used by visitors from England is The route to Ober-Ammergau. through Munich, though the route from Innsbruck through Garmisch-Partenkirchen is frequented by those who have been south, or among the mountains of the Austrian Tyrol. Formerly it was a matter of some difficulty to get to the secluded village, but each succeeding decade has seen some of the difficulties removed, and the journey is now quite simple.

The railway from Munich to the Bavarian Highlands runs past the Starnberger See, From Munich to Oberau. a lake many miles long with pleasantly wooded banks. It was in the waters of the lake that King Ludwig, the friend of the Ober-Ammergauers and the patron of Wagner, met his death, and there is a memorial chapel near the spot where his body was found. Far off, beyond the blue



THE ABBOT'S HOUSE, ETTAL, FORMERLY AN INN.

[To face p. 24.



waters of the lake, rise the snowcapped hills, towards which the railway climbs by steep gradients. The pilgrims to the Passion Play of 1870 could go by rail no further than Weilheim, and thence had to drive many miles. In 1880 the line was open so far as Murnau, a village by the pretty little lake Staffelsee. This station has now again become important as the starting point of the electric railway which runs through Kohlgrub and Unter-Ammergau to its terminus close to the theatre at Ober-Ammergau. The stations at Murnau are side by side, and the gauge is the same, so that if the electric arrangements break down, as they did in 1900, the line can be worked by steam locomotives. Most visitors to Ober-Ammergau choose the new route, which lands them in the village. But a far pleasanter way, since the electric line runs through comparatively tame country, is to go on to Oberau, as every one was compelled to do in 1890, and thence by road to Ettal and Ober-Ammergau.

From Oberau the road ascends steeply by a new road zigzagging up the mountain, constructed by the commune of Ober-Ammergau with part of the proceeds of the Play of 1880. For good walkers there is another path, the still steeper old road, now deserted

The road from  
Oberau.

and become a mere footway, which crosses the new road at a point about a mile short of Ettal. This is the pass by which through many centuries the merchants of Augsburg toiled painfully with their pack-mules on their way to Italy: the pass, too, by which the Emperor Ludwig the Bavarian must have come after depositing the image of the Blessed Virgin at Ettal. Up this road the Counts Pappenheim, to whom for many years the monastery of Ettal belonged, were accustomed to be drawn by yokes of white oxen in their heavy travelling carriage. On this old road, visible also from the new road, there is a monument of melancholy interest. It records the death of the mason Hauser, who was escorting the image of S. John which forms part of the Calvary group on the Osterbichl hill at Ober-Ammergau. There was an accident at this point, and the statue fell upon Hauser, and so crushed him that he died in a short time.

A little distance short of the village of Ettal the climb ends, and one may rest awhile in the precincts of the monastery.

Of the earlier church of the monastery of Ettal scarcely anything remains. There is  
a part of the cloister, and a door-  
way with a tympanum, and the  
foundations of the church are still  
there, though hidden. It had been con-

Ettal and  
its abbey.



IN THE CLOISTER-GARTH AT ETTAL.

[To face p. 26.]

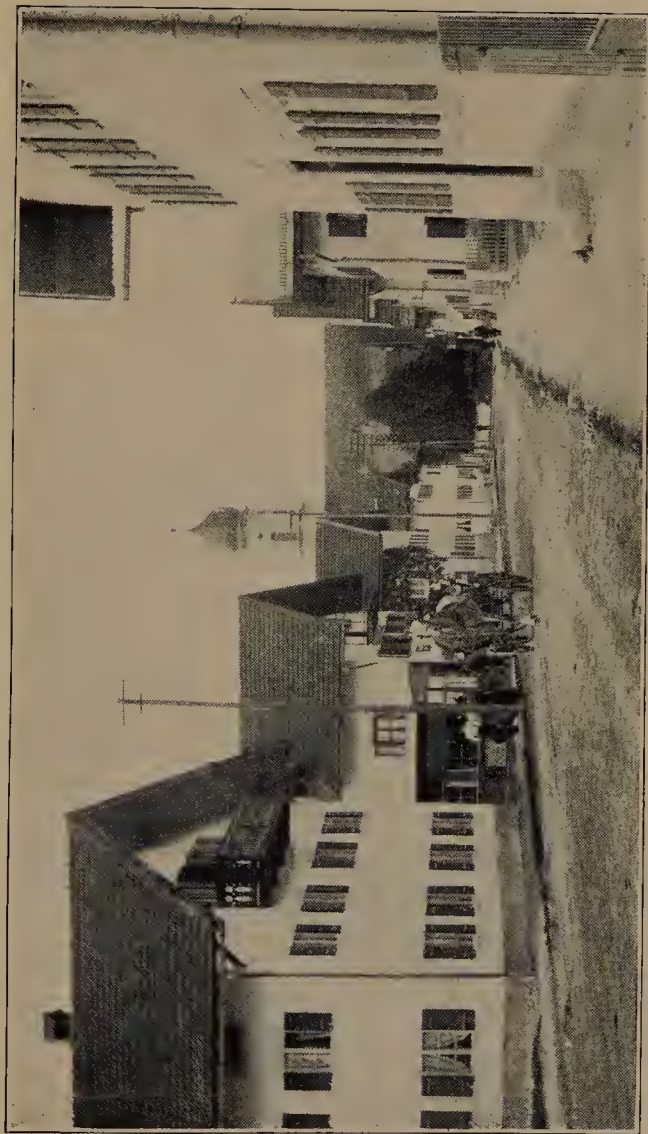


tinually devastated during war, and a fire in the middle of the eighteenth century left only the shell of the building. What the mediaeval church was like may be seen from the great picture of it at the back of the Ober-Ammergau auditorium. It was rebuilt upon the old plan after the fire, but in the manner of the later Renaissance. The nave is circular, and surmounted by a dome. The sanctuary is part of a smaller circle. The altars and their altar-pieces are heavy, but better than much work of their period, and the woodwork of the confessionals and the organ is also remarkable.

For a century the secularized monastery was used as a residence by the Counts Pappenheim, parts of it being assigned to the parish priest and schoolmaster as their residences, and the school was held in it. The old brewery of the monks was continued in use: over the doorway was the pious inscription "GOD bless the beer of Ettal." A few years ago it was purchased and given back to the Benedictines, to whom it formerly belonged, and it is now a house of the learned and artistic Congregation of Beuron. The image which led to the founding of the monastery may still be seen, a crude carving of the Mother and the Holy Child. The great sacristy is worth a visit. Opposite the monastery, by the roadside, is a great house,

once the Abbot's lodging; then a vast and homely inn, with vaulted, brick-paved corridors; now again, with the rest of the monastery, in Benedictine hands.

On leaving the monastery, a little distance on the road to Ober-Ammergau, a building with a round end is passed, Nearing Ober-Ammergau. which is thought to have been the chapel which sheltered the image of Ettal when first it was left here. Then the road passes under the high cliff of the Kapellenwand, and on the left is seen the peak of the Kofel, with its guarding cross, brooding over the village of Ober-Ammergau. Little shrines are seen by the wayside, and in hollows of the rock, some of them recording accidents which are all too frequent on these mountains among the shepherds and woodcutters. Above the road at one point there is a large cave, the Bärenloch, in the mouth of which has been set an image of the Risen LORD. And soon the traveller reaches the goal of his journey, and enters the main street of Ober-Ammergau, passing on the right the Art School, where instruction is given in carving and design, and seeing in front the tower and high nave of the village church.



THE MAIN STREET AND CHURCH.

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IV

**The Village of Ober-Ammergau**

THE church is the centre of the village of Ober-Ammergau, as it is the centre of the life of the people. The long, straight street by which we enter the village from the Ettal side, bordered by houses at regular intervals, and of one type, gives place when the church is reached to a maze of lanes and streets, with houses of more varied design and size, in the older part of the village. Among these it is difficult at first to find one's way readily.

The church is surrounded by a large graveyard, in which the performances of the Passion Play were formerly held. It is well cared for, and here are several graves and monuments to which the visitor will turn.

The church-yard, and its memories.

Near the south gate is the monument to the Ober-Ammergauers who have fallen in war. Between the south gate and the church door is the monument of the old priest Daisenberger, to whom the Play and the village owe so much. A bust surmounts it, showing

a fine, thoughtful face, and at the back of the granite pedestal is a touching inscription, "Dem opferfreudigen Seelsorger und Lehrer, dem treuen Freunde und Berather, dem lang-jährigen Leiter der Passionspiele, errichtet in dankbarer Liebe und Verehrung von der Gemeinde Oberammergau. 1885." The bust was given by Otto Lang, and is his work, a sculptor who has made a name for himself in Munich, and is by birth an Ober-Ammergauer.

This year many will turn in remembrance and sorrow to the grave of Josef Mayr, most renowned of all Passion Play actors, the Christus of 1870, 1880, and 1890, and the Prologue-Declamator of 1900, who died in 1903. North of the church is the cenotaph of Rochus Dedler, the composer of the Passion Play music, a monument always carefully kept and adorned, though he was buried at Oberföhring.

The church is spacious and well-kept. But it will hardly be thought beautiful by those who do not admire the rococo style in its latest expression. It replaces one which had fallen into disrepair, and was consecrated in the middle of the eighteenth century. The five altars have heavy altar-pieces, the frescoes of the ceiling are fresh and bright. An altar near the stair which ascends steeply to the



MONUMENT TO DAISENBERGER.

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pulpit covers the relics of S. Amandus, Bishop of Maestricht and a great missionary of the Low Countries in the seventh century. The relics were sent from Rome by an Ober-Ammergauer of the Dominican Order. There are two western galleries, used by the choir and musicians, and in one of them is the organ given by the English visitors to the Play of 1890, as a thank-offering.

In the church is another thank-offering, from the English visitors of 1900, a beautiful processional cross, having on the obverse scenes from the Passion, and on the reverse the symbols of the Evangelists, wrought in repoussé work. It bears the inscription, "Hanc crucem crucis vivificae monumentum incolis Ammergoviae superioris hospitibus hospites Angli quidam spectaculum Dominicae passionis gratissime recolentes in usum ecclesiae dederunt." Another part of the thank-offering is kept in the large hall of the Rathhaus. It is an "Archivschränk," or press, in which can be stored the records of the Play, many of which are of early date and very precious. It was designed by Herr Ludwig Lang, Director of the Carving School, and was carved in the school under his direction. During the time of the Passion Play the altars are occupied for several hours on each Sunday, since many priests come from a

distance, and desire to say Mass, so that the office of sacristan is no light one.

The theatre stands at the further end of the village, near the railway station. It has a large auditorium, covered by a  
**The theatre.** semicircular iron roof of wide span, of the type familiar in London railway stations. The back seats, which are well raised, are amply protected from the weather, but the front seats are still exposed, for the tradition of presenting a great part of the action of the Play in the open air must be kept. Externally the auditorium is covered with buff canvas, on which are painted figures in imitation of statuary. The seats are of wood, hinged to allow free passage, and they are approached by many doors, so that the theatre can be quickly filled and cleared, a matter of some importance since the interval for dinner is short. The stage is of great size, as it needs to be to accommodate the vast crowd which takes part in the principal scenes. In front of it a sunk square space contains and partly conceals the orchestra. The stage is flanked by the houses of Pilate and Annas, each approached by a flight of steps, and between these houses and the covered stone building, itself as large as an ordinary theatre, in which the tableaux are arranged and part of the action takes place, are streets



MONUMENT TO ROCHUS DEDLER.

*(To face p. 32.)*



of Jerusalem, opening upon the main stage by arches, through which the crowds enter and depart. On the extreme right and left are colonnades, used for the entry and exit of the chorus. Above are the sky, and the mountains, and the flight and song of birds.

It is a matter of special privilege, requiring the permission of the Burgomaster, to see the whole of the theatre, and the dressing-rooms. All behind the scenes is absolutely simple, the dressing-rooms are of rough pine, with the dresses hanging in perfect order in their assigned places. The acting is entirely in the hands of the people, and is regulated by their tradition. The dresses are designed and made in the village, only the material, and that of the very best, is imported. Many rumours as to the help received from Munich and elsewhere have been current: they need only be mentioned to be discredited.

The older houses of the village are very picturesque, of the type common in the mountains, with broad projecting eaves, and roofs weighted with stones to protect them against the lifting force of the winter gales. Many of them show in their gables the old paintings which preserve their freshness so wonderfully through many years of rough weather. Some of the older paintings are

from the brush of Franz Zwink, great-grandfather of Johann Zwink, whose fine rendering of the part of Judas in the Play of 1890 and 1900 will be remembered. There are several inns, a Rathhaus, and a practice theatre for the plays which the village presents at frequent intervals in the years between the Passion Play periods.

On the right of the lane leading to the theatre is the house of Eduard Lang, the talented and devoted leader of the orchestra. On the left, by the stream and its bridge, is the house of Anton Lang, the Christus of 1900, who is by trade a potter. His wife is a daughter of Jakob Rutz, the leader of the chorus, and was herself a soloist in the last Play. On the other side of the bridge lives Peter Rendl, who married a daughter of Josef Mayr, and who has been in two Plays a most sympathetic and touching S. John.

The Ammer and its little tributary, subject always to floods, have been in late years curbed and in part embanked, to the loss of their former picturesque character, but doubtless to the gain of the village. The stream serves many useful purposes; at one point it turns a watermill, where wood is sawn up; at another it offers room for the village washing to be done from little piers projecting over

The environs  
of the village.



THE THEATRE.

[To face p. 34.



the stream. Along the banks of the main stream walks have been laid out and planted. One leads in the direction of the Kofel, and following its course we reach a little shrine of S. Mary, under the hill. In another direction, eastward of the church, the village hospital is passed, and the Chapel of S. Gregory reached, to which the village sometimes makes procession. It contains a painting of the Passion Play of 1860. Near to it is a tiny hermitage, built of logs by the villagers for their priest Daisenberger, and here he used to pray and meditate in quiet in the summer days.

Across the stream, by the road which passes the theatre, the little hill Osterbichl may be reached, on which King Ludwig's stands the great marble Calvary, Calvary. given to the village by King Ludwig. In the dead of night the villagers would hear the tinkle of sleigh bells, and looking out would see the Swan sleigh, in which the King, when he stayed at Linderhof, would take long, lonely night drives among the mountains, passing often through Ober-Ammergau, and going up to the Calvary to spend a few minutes in devotion before it. It stands as the monument of his devotion to the village, with the people of which he was on terms of intimate friendship.

In the yards and gardens of the houses, during the Passion Play, one may see great covered waggons, in which the peasants of the surrounding neighbourhood arrive, and in which they often sleep, making a picnic to save the expense of lodging. For others, who come on foot many miles over the mountains, shelter is afforded in large, temporary sheds, with rough wooden sleeping-places and coarse bedding. The visitor who has engaged accommodation in the houses of the principal villagers will find simple comfort and fare, with which he will have no just cause to be dissatisfied.



KING LUDWIG'S CALVARY ON THE OSTERBICHL.

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V

## The Structure of the Passion Play

THE text of the Passion Play was for the first time published *officially* in 1900, though

Text and  
translations.

unofficial versions had for some time been obtainable, and various translations were accessible

to English readers, notably that by Miss Drew, published in 1881, and that by Miss Trench, published in 1890. The official text is that of the Play as finally arranged by Father Daisenberger. A few minor changes are from time to time made in the acting version, but they are not of any great importance. The synopsis of the Play which follows is based upon the official text of 1900, which will doubtless be closely followed in the representations of 1910.

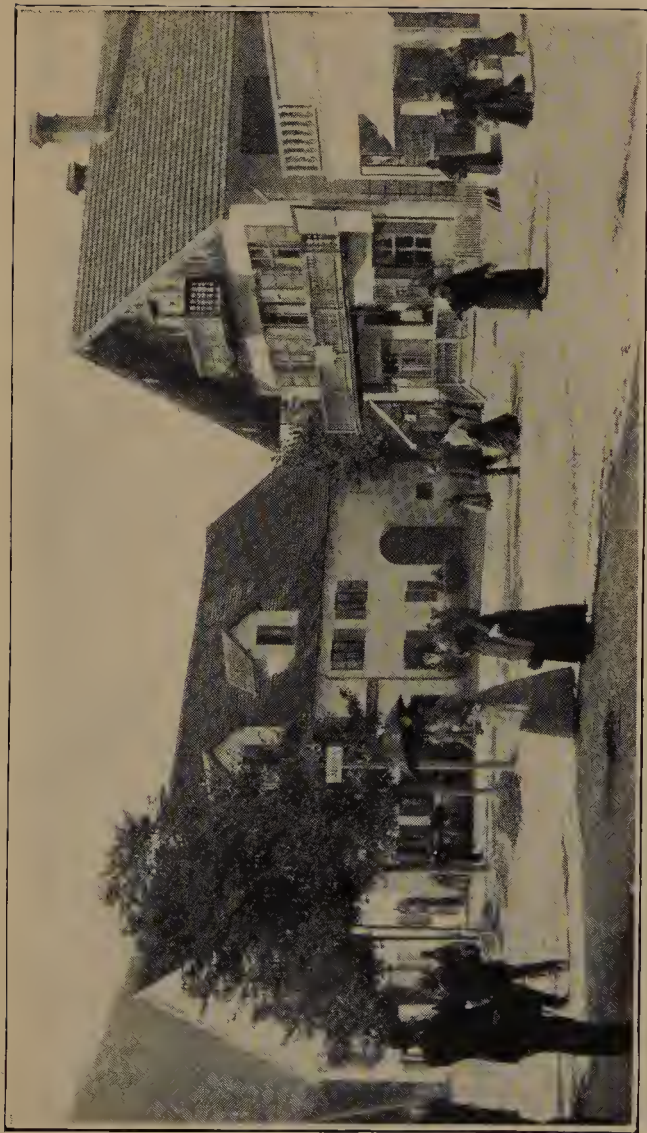
At the beginning of each scene the outer stage is vacant, and the drop-scene of the inner theatre is lowered. From

Scheme of  
the Play.

each of the colonnades right and left of the outer stage, beyond the houses of Annas and Pilate, the chorus enters in line, and as the leaders of each half of the chorus meet in the middle of

the stage they turn to face the audience, with the Prologue-Declamator and Choragus in the middle of the line. The chorus of "Schutzgeister," or Guardian Spirits, is habited in long white tunics, girded at the waist, and coloured mantles, edged with the Greek key pattern in gold, fastened as a cope is fastened with its morse. Their feet are sandalled: upon their heads are small coronets, rising to a cross in the middle.

A Prologue indicates the subject of the tableaux and scenes which are to follow, and appeals to the devotion of the spectators, so giving the keynote to the whole scene. There follows a chorus, during which the line of singers divides, drawing back so as to reveal the inner stage, upon which the drop-scene is raised to show a tableau from the Old Testament, which exhibits the event or person of which the coming scene from the New Testament is to show the antitype or fulfilment. The tableau is shown for half a minute or so, sometimes for a second time with a slight variation in the pose of the figures. As the drop-scene falls the chorus resumes its original formation in line along the whole length of the outer stage. At the conclusion of the chorus the Schutzgeister divide, and go off by the colonnades by which they entered, and the action of the scene from the New Testament begins.



NEAR THE THEATRE, HOUSE OF ANTON LANG.

[To face p. 38.]



## NOTE

THOSE who wish to follow the text of the Passion Play will naturally turn either to the German official text, or to the excellent translation by Miss Trench, or that by Miss Drew.

There are those, however, who are either quite familiar with the text of the Play, or who do not wish to have their attention diverted from the action to such a degree as is involved in the following of the text as the Play proceeds. These may welcome a synopsis of the Play. It follows the official text, indicating the themes of the Prologue and the chorus, the subjects of the tableaux, and the action of the scenes. The references to the scenes, within brackets, will readily enable the spectator to find the place in the official text.

## VI

## Synopsis of the Play

## INTRODUCTION

THE opening *Prologue* declares the love of GOD for sinners, shown in the Atonement.

During the *Tableau* of the Expulsion from the Garden of Eden the *Chorus* declares that from the hill of Calvary a gleam of dawn shines through the night, and entreats the mercy of GOD, Who, to sinners who have despised His law, gives His only SON, to free them by His death from the curse of sin.

A second *Tableau* shows the Adoration of the Cross, while the kneeling *Chorus* entreats the FATHER to hear the stammering lips of His children, who recall the mighty Offering; and exhorts the spectators to follow the Atoning One on His rough and thorny path.

## ACT I

[*Scene 1.*] The crowd pours down the street of Jerusalem, until the whole stage is filled with men, women, and children, waving

palm branches and singing the chorale "Hail to Thee! Hail! Son of David!" Surrounded by the Apostles, and seated upon the ass led by John, CHRIST appears, blessing the multitudes. As the chorale ends, He alights and [*Scene 2*] enters the inner stage, arranged to represent the court of the Temple, and with dignity rebukes the traders for making the FATHER'S house a house of merchandise, overthrowing the tables of the moneychangers, liberating the doves, scourging the traffickers from the Temple courts. The priests demand His authority for the action: He replies by giving them the "sign" of the coming Resurrection. He passes on to the inner part of the Temple, followed by the Hosannas of the children, [*Scene 3*] while the priests remain to denounce Him, and [*Scene 4*] the traders arrange to lay a complaint before the High Priest.

## ACT II

The *Prologue* speaks of the conspiracy of evil against CHRIST, the hatred of demons, the madness of pride in those who believe that they do GOD service, and link themselves to the circle of the priests. For Him the cup of sorrow will soon be full, hatred conspiring with covetousness to plot for His death and destruction.

The *Chorus*, while the *Tableau* of Joseph cast into the pit by his brethren is shown, sings of the vengeance which is being plotted against CHRIST, comparing with it the conspiracy of the sons of Jacob against their brother. An impatient prayer for the destruction of CHRIST'S foes is answered by a solo in which the mission of CHRIST is declared to be one of pardon and not of destruction, and the chorus ends with the adoration of GOD'S plan of redeeming love. [*Scene 1.*] The members of the Sanhedrim are found debating the situation, resolving to arrest CHRIST, and determining, since it would be dangerous to arrest Him on the feast day, to enlist the aid of the offended traders. Nathanael leaves to fetch in the traders, whom he has at hand. [*Scene 2.*] Caiaphas declares that GOD still protects Israel. [*Scene 3.*] Nathanael brings in the traders, of whom one asserts that he can bribe one of CHRIST'S followers. They depart, and [*Scene 4*] Caiaphas and Annas express their hope and conviction that the plan will succeed.

### ACT III

The *Prologue* speaks of the coming separation of CHRIST from those who love Him, a separation prefigured by the sorrow of the

mother of Tobias, and the sorrow of the Bride of the Canticles at the absence of the Bridegroom. But the sorrow in the heart of Mary is a sorrow of calm resignation: though the sword pierces her heart she puts her trust in GOD.

While the *Tableau* of the departure of Tobias from his home is shown, the *Chorus* sings of the grief of his mother: and while the *Tableau* of the lamenting Bride of the Canticles, surrounded by the daughters of Jerusalem is shown, the *solo* and *chorus* describe her grief, and look forward to its ending with the return of the Beloved.

[*Scene 1.*] CHRIST speaks to the Apostles of the coming ascent to Jerusalem, and the approaching fulfilment of prophecy in the betrayal, Passion, and Resurrection. [*Scene 2.*] Simon, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary Magdalene enter, and bid Him to their home at Bethany. [*Scene 3.*] In the guest-chamber of Simon's house they speak of the thickening plots, and CHRIST reassures them. Mary Magdalene anoints the feet of CHRIST. Judas rebukes the wastefulness of her act, and is reproved by CHRIST, Who asks him whether it is really sympathy for the poor which moves him. [*Scene 4.*] CHRIST takes leave of Mary Magdalene, bidding her to be comforted, though the night comes on and the storm rages, for in the dawn, in the

garden of spring, she will see Him again. He must depart, for it is the will of the FATHER, but He bears them in His heart, and His blessing follows them. Then [*Scene 5*] He takes leave of the Blessed Virgin, who professes her submission to the will of the FATHER, and desires only to die with CHRIST her Son. He foretells that as she shares His sorrow, so she will rejoice in His victory, and He commends her to the care of the women, thanking her for her tender mother's care during three and thirty years.

## ACT IV

The *Prologue* exhorts the people of GOD to behold the Redeemer and to follow Him. Jerusalem shows herself blind and deaf to His appeal. Therefore she is rejected by GOD, as Vashti was rejected by the king. The kingdom of GOD will be taken from Israel and given to other nations, who will bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

The *Chorus* bids Jerusalem awake and hear the things which belong to her peace, lest the anger of the LORD be poured forth upon her. The *Tableau* of the rejection of Vashti and the choosing of Esther moves the *Chorus* to declare the rejection of Israel, though if the Jews would even at the last

moment hear the Word of GOD they might find grace.

[*Scene 1.*] As the twelve Apostles and their Master go toward Jerusalem they praise its magnificence, but CHRIST weeps over the city whose fate He foresees. He sends Peter and John into the city to arrange for the use of the guest-chamber, that He may eat the Passover with His disciples. They kneel for His blessing and depart. [*Scene 2.*] Judas points out that they have but little money left. CHRIST warns him against the spirit of covetousness, reminding Judas that hitherto nothing has been wanting to them, and promising that they shall never lack sustenance. The rest go out, but [*Scene 3*] Judas left alone soliloquizes of his doubts, of the way in which the Master lets slip His opportunities, of the poverty and humiliation which he sees impending, and of his resolve to separate himself from the company of the Master, taking the little money which he has been able to put by out of the common fund. [*Scene 4.*] Dathan the trader enters, and Judas tells him that he is about to leave the Master. [*Scene 5.*] Other traders enter, and persuade Judas that he ought to secure himself, and tell him of the reward which the Council offers to any one who will tell them where CHRIST resorts. Judas arranges to meet them in a short time, and [*Scene 6*]

being again left alone argues with himself that if he betrays CHRIST he will become famous as one that has helped to preserve Israel, and that if CHRIST should after all conquer, he himself can, at least, throw himself at CHRIST'S feet, as a penitent. After all, he reasons, to show where CHRIST may be found would be no betrayal. He will not be a traitor—and his livelihood is at stake. [*Scene 7.*] Peter and John meet Baruch with the pitcher of water, and arrange with him and Mark for the use of the upper room.

## ACT V

The *Prologue* speaks of the Divine Friend, urged by love, giving Himself to His own people as the Food of their souls during their pilgrimage on earth, before He sets out on the Way of the Cross. Ready to offer Himself, He consecrates a sacrificial meal, which through a thousand years and to the end of time shall proclaim His love. The children of Israel were satisfied with manna in the wilderness, and at the sight of the clusters of grapes from Canaan their hearts were rejoiced. Yet a better feast, and one in truth from heaven, is offered by JESUS. Out of the mystery of His love spring grace and blessing for us.

The *Chorus* sings of the hour of fulfilment, in which a new feast is to be instituted, since GOD will no more receive the old sacrifice of the Law from His people. And as the *Tableau* of the Manna in the Wilderness is shown, there is a song of praise to GOD Who satisfies hungry souls with a new and wondrous Food, which will sustain both soul and body, as the manna in the wilderness could not do. The *Chorus* proceeds, as the *Tableau* of the grapes brought from Canaan is shown, to declare that the wine of the New Covenant is the Blood of CHRIST, which satisfies the soul's thirst.

[*Scene 1.*] CHRIST and the Apostles are seen seated in the upper room. He drinks and gives to them the cup of the Passover, rebuking them for their strife about precedence, and girding Himself with the towel, sets the example of humility by washing the disciples' feet. The institution of the Holy Communion follows, while a hidden chorus of angels sings of the love and condescension of the Redeemer. CHRIST speaks of the betrayer, and whispers to John of the sign by which the traitor will be known. The sop is given to Judas, who at once goes out, the disciples wondering at his departure. [*Scene 2.*] Peter protests his constancy, but CHRIST foretells his coming fall. Then all rise, and recite the psalm of thanksgiving,

"Praise the LORD, all ye people." CHRIST bids them not to be troubled, since they believe on Him, and urges them to keep His commandment of mutual love.

## ACT VI

The *Prologue* laments the secession to the enemies of CHRIST of the false friend who, for a few pieces of silver, sets aside all love and truth. So did the sons of Jacob sell their brother, for an accursed price, to the hands of strangers, for the worship of money kills all generous instincts.

The *Chorus* contemplates the treachery of Judas, while the *Tableau* is shown which represents the sale of Joseph by his brethren. The two actions are compared. Yet, sings the *Chorus*, Christians who despise these traitors often themselves betray GOD and man, destroying peace and joy and blessedness by their envy and greed.

[*Scene 1.*] Caiaphas in the Sanhedrim announces the glad news that one of the followers of CHRIST has been induced to act as the guide of those who are to arrest Him. [*Scene 2.*] Dathan and Judas are brought in, and the bargain being struck, the thirty pieces of silver are counted out to Judas, who appoints a meeting with the band of

men who are to arrest CHRIST. [*Scene 3.*] The members of the Sanhedrim, left alone, decree that CHRIST shall die, in spite of the protests of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, who at length leave the place where judgement has been unjustly given. [*Scene 4.*] The Sanhedrim, rid of the presence of Nicodemus and Joseph, resolves to carry out the sentence of death by the agency of the Roman governor; or, if that plan should fail, in a popular insurrection.

## ACT VII

The *Prologue* declares that the sin of man presses upon the Redeemer as the struggle to expiate his guilt in the sweat of his brow pressed upon Adam. The traitor Judas draws near, betraying his Master with the seal of love. So did Joab betray Amasa, greeting him with a kiss at the moment that he stabbed him.

The *Chorus* tells how Judas, having received the Blessed Sacrament, was entered by Satan, and went out immediately from the upper room to the assembly of the Jews to sell CHRIST. This most dreadful of deeds is soon completed: Judas is in this night to betray his Master. Then, as the *Tableau* of Adam and Eve at work is shown, the *Chorus*

sings of the toil of Adam, which was the result of sin, and of the suffering of JESUS, which resulted from His drinking of the cup of sorrow. As the second *Tableau* shows the death of Amasa, the *Chorus* sings of the foul murder of Joab, which brought a curse even upon the rocks of Gibeon, and prays the earth to swallow him up.

[*Scene 1.*] Judas appears, leading the band of soldiers and the traders, and gives them the sign by which they shall identify CHRIST. [*Scene 2.*] In the garden of olives CHRIST speaks to His disciples of their coming sorrow, and prays upon the Mount, while sleep gradually overcomes the disciples. [*Scene 3.*] An angel appears, strengthening CHRIST with the thought of the blessing which will result from the conflict. He returns to the disciples, telling them that the hour is come, and at the same moment Judas advances with the soldiers. [*Scene 4.*] Judas kisses CHRIST: the soldiers fall to the ground, but at the word of CHRIST arise and arrest Him. Peter smites Malchus, and CHRIST gives the touch of healing. The disciples scatter, and CHRIST is taken away by the soldiers.

END OF THE FIRST PART

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## SECOND PART

## ACT VIII

Behold the Redeemer, says the *Prologue*, dragged from one place of judgement to another during this dreadful night. Once He is smitten on the face, in repayment for a truth spoken to Annas. So Micaiah was smitten by a lying prophet, when he told the truth to King Ahab. Such is the reward of truth, yet at last its light will shine through the darkness.

The *Chorus* tells of the beginning of the painful conflict, the conflict of Gethsemane, and bids sinners remember that it was for them that the Redeemer sank beneath the shade of the olive trees, in the sweat of agony. And as the *Tableau* showing the prophet Micaiah smitten before Ahab is shown, the *Chorus* takes up the theme of the Prologue and expands it.

[*Scene 1.*] Annas, on the balcony of his house, speaks of the anxiety which besets him, until he can be sure that CHRIST is taken. Priests depart to get news of what is proceeding, and return to announce that CHRIST has been arrested. With them appears Judas [*Scene 2*], who is horrified to hear that the Master's death has been de-

terminated, and goes out in an agony of remorse, mocked by the Pharisees. [*Scene 3.*] CHRIST is brought on to the balcony. Annas is told the details of the arrest, and after CHRIST'S answer to the question of the High Priest, He is smitten on the face by Balbus, and led away [*Scene 4*], mocked by the soldiers who escort Him. [*Scene 5.*] Peter and John before the house of Annas debate anxiously what has become of the Master, and are warned by a priest, Esdras, to go away, lest they also be arrested. Esdras wonders as they go whether they are of the followers of the Galilean, who must all be destroyed if their movement is to be put down.

## ACT IX

The *Prologue* speaks of the patience of CHRIST before His enemies, now become His judges. He is patient even when they lie to procure His condemnation, even when they sentence Him to death. So the patient Naboth was persecuted and sentenced with the aid of false witnesses. And in Job also is to be seen a type of the heavenly patience of CHRIST.

The *Chorus* mourns the sufferings of CHRIST, dragged from Annas to Caiaphas. As the *Tableau* of the death of Naboth

is shown, the *Chorus* sings of the wickedness of the act, and bids men remember to be just, since before the GOD of Justice all are equal. In the *Tableau* of the sorrows of Job, mocked by his neighbours, is seen an image of CHRIST exhibited in His sorrows to the sport of men: "Behold the Man!"

[*Scene 1.*] The band of men leads CHRIST with mockery through the streets. [*Scene 2.*] In the sleeping-chamber of Caiaphas, among the priests and Pharisees, Caiaphas declares that he will carry out a plan, which he has framed, for CHRIST'S condemnation. [*Scene 3.*] CHRIST is brought in, and false witness is given against Him. Caiaphas declares that He has spoken blasphemy, and all adjudge Him worthy of death. He is led away. [*Scene 4.*] Caiaphas and the priests determine to assemble at daybreak, to confirm the sentence in full Council, and then to bring CHRIST before Pilate for its execution. [*Scene 5.*] Judas is seen, torn with remorse, resolving to go into the house of Caiaphas to ascertain what has been determined. [*Scene 6.*] In the hall of Caiaphas, where the soldiers and servants are jesting and talking by the fire, the maid Hagar accuses Peter of being a disciple of the Galilean, and the threefold denial follows. At the last denial CHRIST, led through the

hall, looks upon Peter. [*Scene 7.*] Peter is seen lamenting his grievous fall, yet comforted by the look of CHRIST, loving and compassionate, which assures him that there is yet place for repentance, and he resolves that nothing shall ever again separate him from CHRIST. As he goes out, John enters, wondering what is become of Peter, and determining that he will go to Bethany to tell the Blessed Virgin what has happened. "O Judas," he cries as he goes, "what a fearful act hast thou accomplished!" [*Scene 8.*] CHRIST is seen in the midst of the mocking soldiers. A messenger enters, to summon them and their Prisoner to the presence of Caiaphas.

## ACT X

The *Prologue* describes the despair of Judas, tortured by remorse, with the guilt of blood upon his soul. Yet even now he may repent, and find open to him the door of salvation. With Cain he cries, "My sin is too great!" Despair seizes him. That is the last wage of sin.

The *Chorus* recalls the word of CHRIST, "It had been better for that man if he had not been born." Rent by despair, he lays down the burden of life. While the *Tableau* of the death of Abel is shown, the *Chorus*

compares the flight of Cain to that of Judas. But since they bear within them the pain of hell, they cannot hope to escape it by flight. Heaven's punishment may be delayed, but it will fall.

[*Scene 1.*] Judas soliloquizes. The Master is condemned. There is no hope. He can keep the price of blood no longer; even though he cannot purchase back the Master, he will have no part in the blood of the innocent. [*Scene 2.*] Caiaphas in the Sanhedrim declares that the sentence of death is irrevocable. [*Scene 3.*] Judas hastens in, protests that he has been made a traitor, throws down the pieces of silver, and rushes out, realizing at last that he is a traitor, and lost. [*Scene 4.*] The Sanhedrim determines to spend the thirty pieces of silver upon the potter's field. [*Scene 5.*] CHRIST is brought before the Sanhedrim. He confesses that He is the SON of GOD. The sentence of death is confirmed. Messengers from the Sanhedrim are sent to Pilate. [*Scene 6.*] The messengers appear before Pilate's house, and arrange with a servant of Pilate for the reception of the petition of the Sanhedrim. [*Scene 7.*] Judas, convinced that for him there is no hope, no penitence, since the Master is a prisoner and as one dead, whose murderer is Judas, prepares to hang himself.

## ACT XI

The *Prologue* declares that the sentence of death against the enemy of Moses has been taken up by the voice of the people, as the people rose against Daniel. So man deceives himself, and becomes beside himself, making injustice virtue, and hating virtue itself.

The *Chorus* sings of the sentence of the Sanhedrim, which it desires Pilate to confirm. The *Tableau* of the accusation of Daniel leads the *Chorus* to compare his case with that of CHRIST, and to warn man against the vice of envy.

[*Scene 1.*] Before the house of Pilate appear the members of the Sandehrim, and CHRIST in charge of soldiers. [*Scene 2.*] Quintus enters. The clamour increases. To them [*Scene 3*] Pilate comes out. The Sanhedrim, through Caiaphas, demands that he shall execute the sentence of death pronounced by it. Pilate asks His crime, and declines to be made their tool. He defends CHRIST against the charge of sedition, and commands Him to be brought on to the balcony. [*Scene 4.*] On the balcony Pilate asks CHRIST of Himself, whether He is a king. CHRIST replies that He is a King, and that every one that is of the truth heareth His voice. Pilate asks, "What is truth?"

[*Scene 5.*] A servant comes to tell Pilate of his wife's dream. Pilate sends her a message of reassurance, [*Scene 6*] and consults with his attendants as to the real meaning of the whole matter, speaking of the impression which CHRIST has made upon him. [*Scene 7.*] He parleys again with the Jews, and learning that CHRIST is a Galilean, sends Him to Herod.

## ACT XII

The *Prologue* tells how CHRIST, brought before Herod, refuses to satisfy him with wonders and prophecies, and is therefore mocked. So Samson, formerly dreaded, is mocked in his weakness by the Philistines. Yet He Who now seems weak, will ultimately show Himself to be strong.

The *Chorus* sings of the steadfastness of CHRIST in face of His enemies' anger. The *Tableau* of Samson, mocked by the Philistines, leads to the comparison of CHRIST'S mocking with Samson's, since He is made the gazing-stock of fools.

[*Scene 1.*] Herod speaks to his court of his desire to see CHRIST. [*Scene 2.*] CHRIST is brought in, and Caiaphas, Annas, and priests enter also. They demand confirmation of the death sentence. Herod asks how he can give it: and turning to CHRIST

demands a proof of His power, that all may believe on Him. CHRIST is silent. Herod says that he will make Him the king of fools. The priests demand His death. CHRIST is led away, mocked by the soldiers. [*Scene 3.*] Caiaphas argues with Herod, who refuses to do more, and weary of the matter, leaves it to Pilate. The priests depart, and [*Scene 4*] Herod speaks with a courtier of his disappointment with CHRIST, and of his weariness with the matter.

### ACT XIII

The *Prologue* points to the suffering CHRIST, His head crowned with thorns, His body wounded with the scourge. Who would not weep with compassion at the sight? Jacob, seeing the blood-stained coat of his son, was filled with sorrow. Let us also weep when we see the Divine Friend of our souls enduring such things!

The *Chorus* declares that the rage of the enemies of CHRIST is not yet satisfied, the torn Body of the LORD does not soften their hearts. And, as the *Tableau* of the coat of Joseph being brought to his father is shown, they describe his grief and lamentation. As the second *Tableau* shows the sacrifice of Isaac, the *chorus* likens the ram caught in the thorn bush to the Thorn-crowned One,

Who gives His life for others, with a love which cannot be equalled.

[*Scene 1.*] Before the house of Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, the priests, the traders, and the false witnesses appear, with CHRIST in the hands of the guard. They speak of their determination to win from Pilate the execution of their sentence. [*Scene 2.*] Pilate comes out to them. He appeals to their compassion, and gives them the choice between JESUS and Barabbas. The people demand Barabbas. He sends away CHRIST to be scourged according to the Roman law, explaining to his attendants that thus His offence may be expiated, and the wrath of the people appeased. [*Scene 3.*] In the absence of CHRIST, Pilate having withdrawn from the balcony, Caiaphas stirs up the traders to inflame the people against CHRIST, and to terrify the minds of CHRIST'S followers. They again demand Barabbas. [*Scene 4.*] CHRIST is seen scourged, mocked, robed with the purple robe, and crowned with thorns. A servant of Pilate enters to summon Him to the judgement hall.

## ACT XIV

The *Prologue* points to the sorrows of CHRIST, and the relentless hate of the people, who demand death for the Holy

One, and life for the murderer Barabbas. Contrast with this the gladness which welcomed Joseph in Egypt, the saviour of the people! The rage of the Jews will not abate until the judge gives sentence of death, against his will.

The *Chorus* calls upon the spectators to see the King—robed and crowned in mockery, the sport of the executioners. The *Tableau* showing Joseph made Governor of Egypt leads them to emphasize the contrast, in a chorus which expresses the joy of Egypt and the greatness of Joseph. Another *Tableau* exhibits the two goats, the one to be sacrificed, the other to be sent free, and the chorus speaks of the Sacrifice of the Lamb which is approaching. As they conclude their chorus, the voice of the people is heard in the streets of Jerusalem, demanding the release of Barabbas, and the *Chorus* answers the people with a demand for the release of JESUS, Who hath done no evil, reminding the people that the Blood of the SON of GOD will be avenged upon them. The people answer, "His Blood be on us and on our children." "So be it" answers the *Chorus*.

[*Scene 1.*] A tumult of people arises, from bands which pour down the different streets, demanding excitedly the death of CHRIST. Caiaphas flatters them, and the people

applaud the Council. He tells them to insist on the release of Barabbas, and to demand CHRIST'S death. [*Scene 2.*] Pilate comes out to the people. Beside him on the balcony is the guard, with CHRIST, to Whom Pilate points, saying, "Behold the Man!" Pilate reasons with the people, who demand persistently the release of Barabbas. They threaten him with an appeal to Cæsar. He releases Barabbas, and at last yields to the demand of the people, and the sentence of death is read. Caiaphas and the people rejoice, saying that now they will keep the feast of the Passover with joy.

## END OF THE SECOND PART

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## THIRD PART

### ACT XV

The *Prologue* speaks of the condemnation, wrung from Pilate. Now JESUS carrying the Cross, ascends the Mount of Golgotha. So Isaac bore the wood of the sacrifice. The Cross willingly borne by JESUS will become a Tree of Life. As the brazen serpent set up in the desert brought healing to those who looked upon it, so the Tree

of the Cross will bring to us comfort and blessing.

The *Chorus* calls upon the spectators to give thanks and pray, since He Who drank the cup of agony goes to the Cross of death, to reconcile the world to GOD. The *Tableau* of Isaac carrying the wood up the Mount of Moriah is likened to CHRIST bearing His Cross, fainting beneath its weight, yet bearing it to Golgotha. The *Tableau* of the Brazen Serpent is shown to be a type of the Cross upon which the Son of Man will soon be nailed, and the healing of the people is a prefiguring of the healing which comes to man through the Cross.

[*Scene 1.*] The holy women come from Bethany, with John and Joseph of Arimathea. The Blessed Virgin yearns to see her Son. They resolve to seek Nicodemus. As they advance the tumult of the procession to Calvary is heard. [*Scene 2.*] CHRIST bearing His Cross is seen, escorted by soldiers, accompanied by crowds of people, execrating Him. [*Scene 3.*] Simon of Cyrene enters, and stands amazed at the noise, but not as yet seeing the procession. [*Scene 4.*] Mary, with a cry of anguish, recognizes her Son. CHRIST falls, and is offered drink by the centurion. The beam of the Cross is laid upon Simon, who takes it willingly. Veronica and the women of Jerusalem approach, and

Veronica offers the napkin. CHRIST speaks to the women of Jerusalem. [*Scene 5.*] A servant of Pilate appears, to summon the centurion for further orders. John desires Mary to return to Bethany, but she determines to follow CHRIST.

## ACT XVI

The *Prologue*, in an address of poignant power, bids pious souls to rise and go to Golgotha, there to see, with hearts of anguish and thankfulness, what there befell for man's salvation. There He lies upon the Cross Who is to redeem the world. Even now the nails are being driven, as we may hear, through His hands and feet. And the curtain rises to disclose the Cross on the ground, and CHRIST stretched upon it, while the *Prologue* continues to exhort men to draw near to the Lamb Who gives Himself freely for His people, praying for His murderers, dying that we may escape eternal death. The *Chorus*, robed in black, takes up the theme, dwells on the greatness of the Divine love, and entreats the spectators to bring to the altar of the Cross, on which the Great Offering is sacrificed, the emotion of pious hearts.

[*Scene 1.*] The two thieves are crucified

on crosses already set up. The inscription is fastened to the Cross of CHRIST, then the Cross is raised, and wedged upright. Caiaphas demands the removal of the inscription, and sends priests to Pilate. The executioners cast lots for the coat, having divided the mantle. The priests return from Pilate, with the answer that the inscription is to remain. The priests mock CHRIST, telling Him to come down from the Cross. CHRIST prays forgiveness for them. The thieves speak to each other, and CHRIST replies to the prayer of the penitent. Mary and John approach the cross, and CHRIST commends them to one another. The sponge is lifted to CHRIST'S lips. Uttering the last word, He dies upon the Cross. The priests are affrighted at the earthquake: the centurion confesses his belief. As the people depart in horror, a servant of the Temple hastens in with the news that the veil is rent. Caiaphas refers the portent to CHRIST'S power of enchantment. [*Scene 2.*] The legs of the thieves are broken on their crosses. The side of CHRIST is pierced with the spear. [*Scene 3.*] The priests return, and learn that the Body of CHRIST is to be handed over to His friends. The centurion and soldiers depart. Caiaphas and Annas express their fear of deceit, and determine to ask from Pilate a guard for the grave.

[*Scene 4.*] The Body of CHRIST is taken down from the Cross, laid on the knees of Mary, and borne to the grave.

## ACT XVII

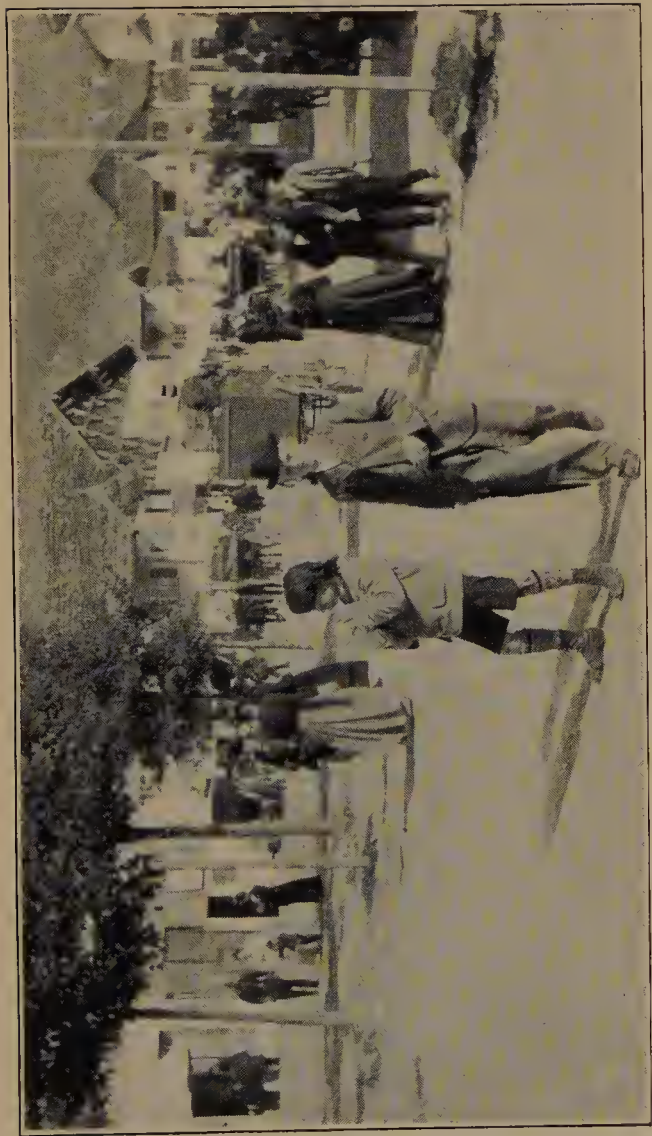
The *Prologue* announces joyfully that all is accomplished. Peace and joy to us! From the strife of CHRIST we have won freedom, from His death, life. The Holy One rests, but for a short time, in the grave. He will arise to life. The *Chorus* takes up the theme of CHRIST'S rest in the grave.

[*Scene.*] The guards are seen talking around the mouth of the grave. CHRIST rises. Astonished, the guards hasten away to the Pharisees.

The *Prologue* announces the Resurrection, and the triumph of CHRIST, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Who has bruised the serpent's head. He bids the song of Alleluia! to arise. After humiliation, there is the victory of the Conqueror. Now He ascends. The *Prologue* bids those who have come to return to their homes strengthened and joyful at the sight, filled with love for Him Who has loved even unto death, and still in heaven loves His people. Praise to the Lamb Who was slain! Reunited round the Redeemer, may we all meet in heaven! The *Chorus*

takes up the song of praise and victory, and the *Tableau* of the Ascension is shown, while the *Chorus* continues its song of praise, ascribing to CHRIST worship, power and praise for evermore.

THE END.



ON THE WAY TO THE THEATRE.

[To face p. 66.



## VII

**On the Day of the Play**

THE Passion Play is usually given on every Sunday throughout the summer—this year the first performance will be given on Whit Monday—on the greater festivals, and on such extra days as may be found necessary when the throng of visitors is great. On the evening before the performance the village band plays in procession through the streets.

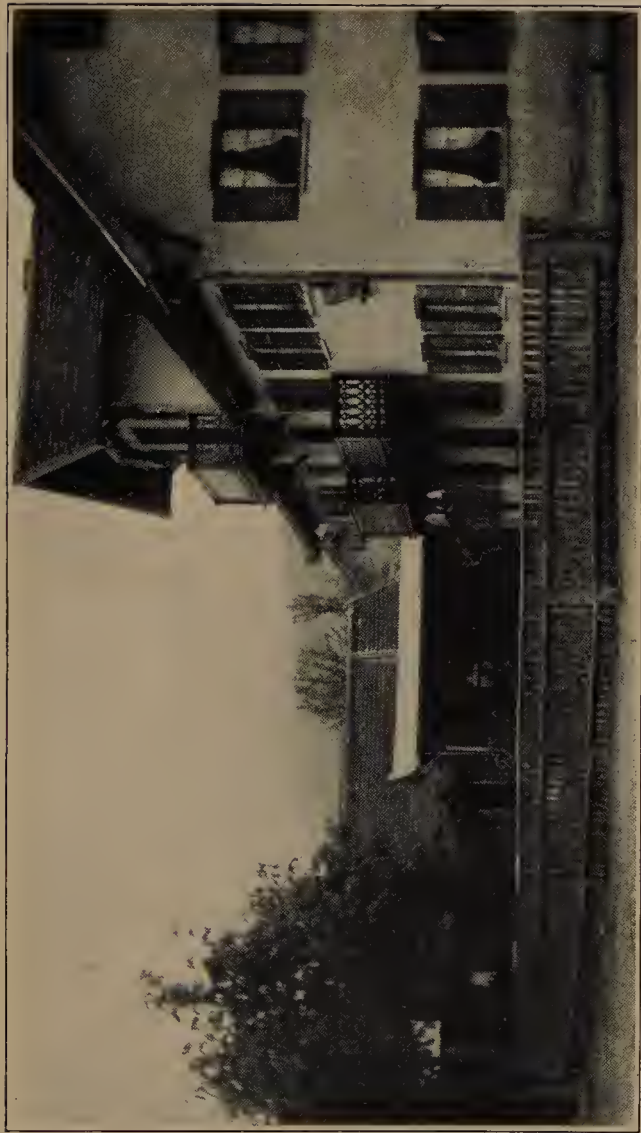
On the mornings when the Play is given there is a sung Mass in the church at six o'clock. Breakfast at seven allows  
**Time-table.** one plenty of time to reach the theatre and one's seat, before the signal gun at eight o'clock announces the entrance of the Chorus, and the beginning of the Play. The first part is over by about midday: the second part begins at half-past one, and concludes soon after five o'clock.

From the necessity of the case the first half of the Play is much more dramatic and  
**Foci of interest.** interesting than the earlier part of the second half, until the Way of the Cross is reached. For

in the first part the action is swift and vigorous, and there are many points of culminating interest. It is interesting to watch the development of the plotting against CHRIST, which begins as soon as He has left the Temple-court which He has cleared of the traffic. Then it is that the priests, seeking ground of accusation, see in the indignation of the traders their opportunity of working upon the people, and begin to use it most skilfully. Scarcely anything in the text of the Play is more skilfully done

than the development of the  
**Developments** conspiracy against CHRIST, and  
**of plot and** the fostering of popular indignation  
**character.** against Him. The counsels

of Caiaphas, the passionate pleadings of the priest Nathanael, two parts of great importance, are shown as gradually producing their effect. So, also, in the first part, we watch with sad interest the development of evil in Judas. He is represented as the weak man who deserts the failing cause, the selfish man whose indecision is finally developed and determined into action by self-interest and covetousness, who cannot foresee the ultimate end of his action, and is horror-struck when it comes about. At first he is merely a waverer, dreading the unpopularity and poverty which he sees to be coming upon the Master. When at last he is approached



HOUSE OF THE LATE BURGOMASTER, JOSEF MAYR.



by one of the offended traders he determines to secure his own future, without any thought of taking a step that cannot be retraced, without a suspicion that he is the most culpable of traitors.

In the first part, also, there are scenes of intense dramatic interest. The stately sweep onward of the Palm Sunday procession, with its glad melody, its vivid colour, its splendid unity, is one of the things that live always in one's memory. The leave-taking at Bethany is almost too poignant in its appeal. The hush of the great action of the upper room, where the stillness is broken only by the interpretative chorus of the angelic choir, is almost the hush of the Action itself, made real and effectual at our altars.

In the second part, the scenes in which the malignity of the Jews is set forth, the series of appearances and trials before Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, are very long. Yet they do but impress upon the spectator the reality of the suffering, the long-drawn agony of that night of false witness, mockery, and torture which preceded the ascent to Calvary. Then the Way of the Cross begins, and devotion quickens. The separation begun at Bethany, culminates in the recognition by Mary of her Son as He bears His Cross. The sympathy of the holy women, and of Veronica, contrasts with the exultation of

the priests, the indifference of the people, the cruelty of the soldiers; the fidelity of the little group beneath the Cross with the fear which has overwhelmed the rest of the disciples and led to their flight. *Prologue* and *Chorus* become more and more searching in their appeal to the spectator, in their narrative of the suffering. Finally, there is the triumphant *Prologue* in which the victory of the Resurrection and Ascension is recounted, the glorious chorus and song of praise to Him Who overcame death.

Those only will profit by the witnessing of the Passion Play who go to it in the spirit of devotion, with no prejudices, and as few preconceptions as possible. The thought that all who take part in it are simple villagers, the majority poor peasants or wood-carvers, animated only by the spirit of religion, should be continually present to the mind of the spectator, so that criticism may not be unjust or severe. The Play is unique, the rendering of it is a religious act, and it should be to those who witness it an inspiration.

It is well that the spectator should acquaint himself, if possible, before the performance with the position of his seat, with the aid of a plan of the theatre, and find out

The right spirit  
of the spectator.

Practical  
suggestions.



WAGGONS IN WHICH THE PEASANTS ARRIVE.

[To face p. 70.



by which door, and on which side of the theatre, he should enter. Much confusion has been caused in previous years by people who have strayed into seats corresponding with the number of their tickets, but in a different block. It is an act of courtesy to go in good time, so as to be seated for some minutes before the opening chorus, and to remain until the final chorus, one of great beauty, is quite finished. Americans have been the gravest offenders against courtesy, and even reverence, on many occasions.

It is wise, especially during the earlier and later performances of the Play, to be prepared against sudden changes of temperature. The auditorium is in great part covered, but the end facing the stage is open, and the winds of the Ammerthal are cold, and the temperature often falls very suddenly by a good many degrees. And since each part of the Play lasts several hours, it is prudent to be prepared for cold. Ladies should wear *small* hats, veils, or other head-gear, and men, caps. A large hat may entirely spoil the comfort of the person sitting behind it.

## VIII

**The Origin of Religious Drama**

THE origin of all drama, secular and religious, is to be found in the rites of religion. The

**The religious origin of drama.** Greek drama, which culminated in the glories of the Attic stage had its beginnings in the cult of Bacchus, of whose worship drama was a part, and whose temple was the theatre. In the middle of the orchestra, surrounded by the chorus, the altar of the god had its place; his image was deposited with ceremony in view of the stage on the eve of the festival, to remain there until its close, while the chief priest of the god occupied the best seat in the theatre. "To preserve the sacredness of the performance no person suffering from civil disability was allowed to take part in the chorus. Any form of insult committed in the theatre was punished with death as sacrilege; while the persons of the actors, singers, and dancers were regarded as sacred for the time being. In short, the performance of the old Greek drama was essentially part of a religious celebration, and was in-

tended not merely as an amusement for the people, but as an act of homage and reverence to the god." Every citizen had of right his place in the theatre: the drama was a corporate religious act on the part of the city.

The pagan mysteries also, which were accessible only to the narrower circle of the initiated, were almost entirely dramatic in character. They began with certain ceremonies of purification and worship. But they proceeded with little delay to the recital and representation of the acts of the god in whose honour they were held. The Roman drama was derived from the Greek stage, and shared its religious character. Throughout the East, in India, China, and Japan, the connection between the temple and the theatre has always been close; and to this day in some Mohammedan countries a religious play, centering in the characters of the Moslem heroes Hasan and Husain, is performed night by night during the month Muharram.

It was inevitable that at an early period in the history of the Church the pagan mysteries and the drama generally should come under the ban of the Church, bound up as they were with mysteries and rites of an immoral character. Clement of Alexandria for all his broad sympathies and his keen

The Church  
and the pagan  
mysteries.

appreciation of what was good in Greek thought and life, condemned the theatres in the strongest terms. S. Cyprian, in his Epistle to Donatus, speaks of them as schools of vice: S. Chrysostom calls those fathers who took their sons to theatres "murderers of their children." From time to time the Church in various countries has felt it necessary to echo the words of the Fathers, and to prohibit the drama, when the stage became corrupt, to her faithful children, or at least to her ministers.

So long as the Church was able to exercise an effective discipline over her children, she could prevent them by threat or by suasion from frequenting the heathen plays and mysteries. And when the Church entered upon the age of peace, and her faith became the religion of the Roman Empire, she was able for a time to suppress the drama. But though she could forbid the theatre, she could not suppress the dramatic instinct. She was obliged in self-defence to satisfy the popular demand by herself providing plays and mysteries. As Canon MacColl has said, "The early Christians were not satisfied with denouncing the impure mysteries of pagan mythology; they did not rest content with driving out the evil spirit, leaving the house empty, swept and garnished. They took pains to show that they

had mysteries of their own with which to tenant it, mysteries which were as pure and ennobling as the heathen mysteries were loathsome and degrading."

And thus the Christian drama rose gradually out of the ruins of the Greek theatre.

The rise of  
Christian  
drama. As soon as Christianity emerged from the catacombs and found itself in the enjoyment of freedom, it made a bold and direct attempt to enlist the sympathies of its converts by means of dramatic representations. We find Greek tragedies on sacred subjects almost coeval with the establishment of Christianity, and there is direct evidence to their representation at Constantinople. One of these is the 'Dying CHRIST' of S. Chrysostom, which was acted in church, partly in *tableaux vivants* and partly in dialogue. S. Gregory Nazianzen, too, and other early Christian writers, dramatized portions of Holy Scripture on the model of the ancient Greek plays." In the monasteries of the West, Latin plays were composed and enacted at a comparatively early date.

From the fifth to the tenth century the drama, together with art in all its expressions, suffered with the general decay of learning. With the Norman Conquest there came in England an awakening. Something indeed had been done for literature and art

since the times of the learned Alfred and the accomplished S. Dunstan. But it was not until the foreign priests swept through England in the train of the Conqueror that a general revival took place. The Normans brought with them the picturesque rites and customs of the Continent, they created the atmosphere in which the religious drama awoke to new life. The missals of the English were revised and supplemented, notably by Osmund, the Norman count and statesman who became Bishop of Sarum in 1087. Ceremonial became more elaborate. Religion invoked more insistently the aid of every art. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries ordered worship reached its utmost splendour.

In the Middle Ages a great part of the liturgical worship of the Church was essentially dramatic in character. The Drama and worship. Palm Sunday procession of the

Blessed Sacrament, sometimes with a wooden figure of our LORD riding upon the ass, the night Office of the last three days of Holy Week, the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday, the creeping to the Cross on Good Friday, the reading of the Passion in different tones representing the narrator, the Jews, and CHRIST, the ceremonies which centred in the Easter Sepulchre, were all ways of conveying to the worshipper

through the eye that which the language of Mass and Office enforced in word. On the Feast of the Epiphany the rulers of the choir at Lichfield were regarded as representing the Three Kings; at Exeter, during Matins on Christmas night, a boy in alb and amice, holding a lighted torch in his left hand, stood on the highest step of the altar facing the choir, and sang, "This day the King of heaven for our sakes deigned to be born of a Virgin," after which he was joined by six others, and all together sang "Glory to GOD in the highest." Of a similar character, essentially dramatic, was the ceremony performed in Sarum Cathedral on the Feast of All Saints, when at Matins five boys, representing the five wise virgins, each in a surplice with an amice drawn veil-wise over his head and holding a lighted taper in his hand, sang the response, "I heard a voice from heaven saying, Come all ye wise virgins." At Terce on Whitsun Day the *Veni Creator* was sung before the altar by seven seniors of the choir, each with a censer, representing thus the seven gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT.

By degrees other dramatic ceremonies not expressly enjoined in the rubrics began to be used. Lambard notes that at Whitsuntide in S. Paul's "the coming down of the HOLY GHOST was set forth by a white pigeon that was let to fly out of a hole that yet is to be

seen in the midst of the great aisle, and by a long censer which, descending out of the same place almost to the very ground, was swung up and down . . . breathing over the whole church and company a most pleasant perfume of such sweet things as burned therein." A like custom was observed at Norwich, where there is a similar large hole in place of the middle boss of the vaulting of the nave of the cathedral; and the loosing of the dove, either real or represented, survives to our time in some places on the Continent. "With the like dumb shows," says Lambard, an unsympathetic chronicler, "they used everywhere to furnish sundry parts of their church service, as by their spectacles of the Nativity, Passion, and Ascension." He has in mind the custom at Whitney, in Kent, where at Easter "the priests garnished the church with certain small puppets representing the persons of CHRIST, the watchmen, Marie, and others," a custom which obtained very generally, in various forms, throughout the land.

Many other illustrations might be drawn from the Eastern rites. The Hours of Good Friday in the Greek Office are very dramatic in form, choir answering to choir as the narrative of the Passion proceeds. Among the Nestorian Christians of Persia a mystery representing the admission of the penitent



THE HOUSE OF ANTON LANG.

[To face p. 78.]



thief to Paradise is enacted in the churches on Easter Day, after the Gospel at Mass.

It is difficult to trace an orderly development of miracle plays and mysteries. Their history was the history of the people and of religion. They were a perfectly natural expression of the devotion of their time, and were adapted to the circumstances of their environment and origin, differing widely in form in different districts. From the Conquest to the Reformation—roughly to delimit a period—the life of the people, both secular and religious, was vigorous, full of colour and movement. It was the great age of church-building, and the churches were thronged. The Crusades brought the vivid life of the East into touch with the more restrained and self-conscious life of the West, and profoundly influenced the West both for evil and for good. Municipal life was strong: the people were accustomed to take common action. On the occasion of rejoicing the burgher fell naturally into his place in the stately pageant; the procession and the play, the ceremony in the church and the banquet in the guildhall, were equally a part of his life. The Church seized any and every means of impressing her teaching upon the mind through the eye. The great Rood, the wall-paintings of the Doom, of S. Christopher and of the Gospel

Mysteries and  
popular religion.

incidents, the images of S. Mary and the patron saint, the legends of the saints in painted glass, were to be found in every church: and so adorned it was indeed the Poor Man's Bible. And to their silent appeal was added the more forcible appeal of the pageant.

Sometimes, as in the case of the Easter Sepulchre ceremonies, use was made of inanimate figures, or puppets.

**Use of images in pageants.** A traditional drama of a simple kind would easily and naturally grow up round the image of the popular saint, taken from its niche on the feast, and borne in procession while the acts of his life, miracles, and martyrdom were recited. Sometimes images were grouped to represent incidents in the Gospel narrative, or in the lives of the saints. Of such a kind was, and is, the Christmas Crib, which S. Francis of Assisi first gained leave of Honorius III to erect in 1223, "so as to seize on the popular imagination and impress the unlearned." It was one of those happy ideas of S. Francis, as Mr. Baring-Gould says, which exactly met a want of the time, for the devotion to CHRIST Incarnate which was fostered by the representation of CHRIST in the stable-cave, attended by angels, men, and beasts in adoration, had its effect in dispersing the taint of Manicheism by

which Northern Italy was at that time infected. A curious survival of the use of images in this way has survived in the Flemish town of Furnes, where, on the last Sunday in July, the sodality of the Church of S. Nicholas represents the Stations of the Cross with the aid of wooden figures.

It was a short and easy step from the use of images in groups to the employment of men and women in *tableaux vivants*.  
Living pictures. To this day the kind of pageant which must in many cases have preceded the more elaborated mystery may be seen at Bruges. In that wonderful city, which preserves so much of the beauty and the spirit of the Middle Ages, there is, on the first Monday after the 3rd of May in each year, a great procession in honour of the relic of the S. Sang, conserved in the Bourg chapel. In the procession the young girls of the city represent various saints, S. Godelieve, S. Genevieve, The Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of La Salette, S. Elizabeth of Hungary, and others.

The beginnings of the play proper are scarcely to be distinguished from the ceremonies of the Church into which they were often interpolated. Mr.  
Drama and rites. Sydney W. Clarke, in a very interesting volume on the Miracle Play

in England, to which every student of the subject must necessarily be indebted, thus describes two of the earlier plays:—“The Office of Easter was performed in churches at Easter time to illustrate to the people the story of the Resurrection. Three priests, representing the three Maries, slowly advanced up the church to where a grave had been prepared. An angel sitting by the side of the grave asks them whom they seek, and the women reply that they seek for JESUS of Nazareth, the Crucified. The dialogue and action then follow the Gospel story, till finally a priest, personating the Saviour, appears, and announces His resurrection. This is the signal for the choir to join in with a joyous *Alleluia*, and the play ends with the singing of *Te Deum*. The Office of the Shepherds was performed on Christmas Eve. A cradle was placed on the altar, and beside it an image of the Virgin Mary. A number of the clergy represented the shepherds, carrying crooks, and having with them real sheep and dogs. Some of the shepherds feign to sleep, some to watch their flocks, when suddenly all are aroused as a sweet-voiced boy, dressed as an angel, mounts the pulpit, and from there, after a blast from the trumpeters, announces the birth of JESUS. Thereupon a number of singing-boys, posted in the galleries of the triforium, and representing the

multitude of the heavenly host, begin to sing, "Glory to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The shepherds proceed up the church to the manger, where other priests, personating the attendants, show the Child JESUS, and bid them proclaim His birth to the people. The shepherds adore the Child and His Mother, and then proceed through the church singing a hymn of praise."

It was not to be supposed that the churches would long remain the sole stage, and the clergy and their immediate circle the sole actors in the Mysteries. In the ages of chivalry and the Crusades the jongleur and the wandering minstrel were a power. The religious drama became suddenly popular. The plays presented in the streets by the minstrels became so attractive that the clergy were compelled to take action to secure control of them, to forbid unlicensed plays and performers, and to act in the churches plays of a more elaborate kind than had hitherto been known. Yet even so they found it difficult to keep the control of the drama. The churches were found too small to accommodate the crowds that flocked to the plays, and the stage was removed, first to the churchyard—the stage being sometimes set up in an ample porch—and then to the

streets and open places of the towns. The merchant and craft guilds, which came to express all that was most vigorous in the social and religious life of their time, claimed their share in the plays and pageants. The clergy found that their direct share in the production of the plays became smaller and smaller.

But it was with the assumption by the guilds of the responsibility for the production of the plays that their prosperity became assured. To the various guilds of a city were allotted the production of particular Mysteries, or of particular scenes. For example, in the Chester Plays the Guilds of the Slaters and Wrights presented the Birth of CHRIST, the Painters and Glaziers presented the Shepherds' Play, the Vintners set forth the visit of the Three Kings. The natural rivalry between the guilds induced each guildsman to do his best for the credit of his guild, and the treasure of the guild was freely spent upon the expense of worthy presentation. The wealth of the merchant guilds, and their commerce with the East, enabled them to provide fitting and costly accessories. The simple drama, which had at first presented one Gospel Mystery, or one incident in the life of a saint, was expanded into a cycle, in order that each guild might bear its share: from the Creation to the Day of



OLD HOUSE, WITH WALL-PAINTINGS.

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Judgement no principal event in the history of man's redemption was omitted.

If in some of the plays and pageants laughter lessened reverence, and merriment became gross, it may be said that Naive simplicity, in all life and literature of the time there was a plainness of speech and a refusal to define sharply the boundaries of sacred and secular which to the modern mind is confusing, but which does not necessarily imply that there was much conscious irreverence or coarseness.

Certain characters in the plays were always allowed a degree of licence. Their buffooneries were regarded, in all probability, much as the modern playgoer regards the inanities of Dogberry and Verges, or the coarse fooling of the porter in the very crisis of the tragedy of Macbeth, as a relief to the tense feeling induced by the more serious interests of the play. The part of Judas—the fact is almost incredible—was often regarded as humorous. Even at Ober-Ammergau, in the earlier years of the last century, the suicide of Judas and the entry of devils to seize and eviscerate him, invariably raised a roar of laughter; and Dean Farrar, who wrote an account of the Passion Play in 1890, asserts that when the curtain fell upon the last scene in which Judas appeared, there was a sort of low laugh audible on all sides. The part

of Pilate was coveted, for it was the best paid, and the best dressed, with the exception of that of Herod, who was splendidly arrayed as a Saracen, and carried a formidable sword. "He was represented," says Mr. Clarke, "as being always in a passion, and was sometimes attended by a small boy armed with a bladder attached to a stick, whose duty was to beat Herod whenever his rage gave signs of abating, and so to stir him up to further fury." The Shakespearian expression "to out-Herod Herod" indicates the extravagance with which this part was played. Readers of Chaucer will remember that it is said of Absolon, the scandalous hero of the Miller's tale—

Som tyme to schewe his lightnes and maistrye,  
He playeth Herodz on a scaffold hye.

While for producing in the bystander that combination of amusement and terror, which is the most exquisite of sensations, there was no scene like the Harrowing of Hell, no character like that of the demon who leaped in and out of the gaping jaws, vomiting smoke and surmounted by an embattled tower, which was the accepted convention, the customary scenic rendering of hell's mouth.

In contrast with the rude and coarser elements of the plays were many passages

of dignity and beauty. The dialogue of the Chester Plays is restrained and devout.

with dignity  
and beauty. In these plays there was an Expositor, who explained the

mystery and its meaning to the audience, just as the Prologue-Declamator and the Chorus of the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play explain the tableaux and scenes which are to follow, and give the devotional keynote to what is to come. Part of the Play of the Shepherds from the Chester cycle was performed last year in the Church Pageant at Fulham; and in *Everyman's Library*, published by Messrs. Dent, there is a shilling volume containing the text of several mediaeval plays, which will give an excellent idea of their scope and characteristics. The Nativity Play from Coventry in especial contains many beautiful and tender passages, and all are well worth study.

In the later days of the Miracle Play in England, after the church porch and church-

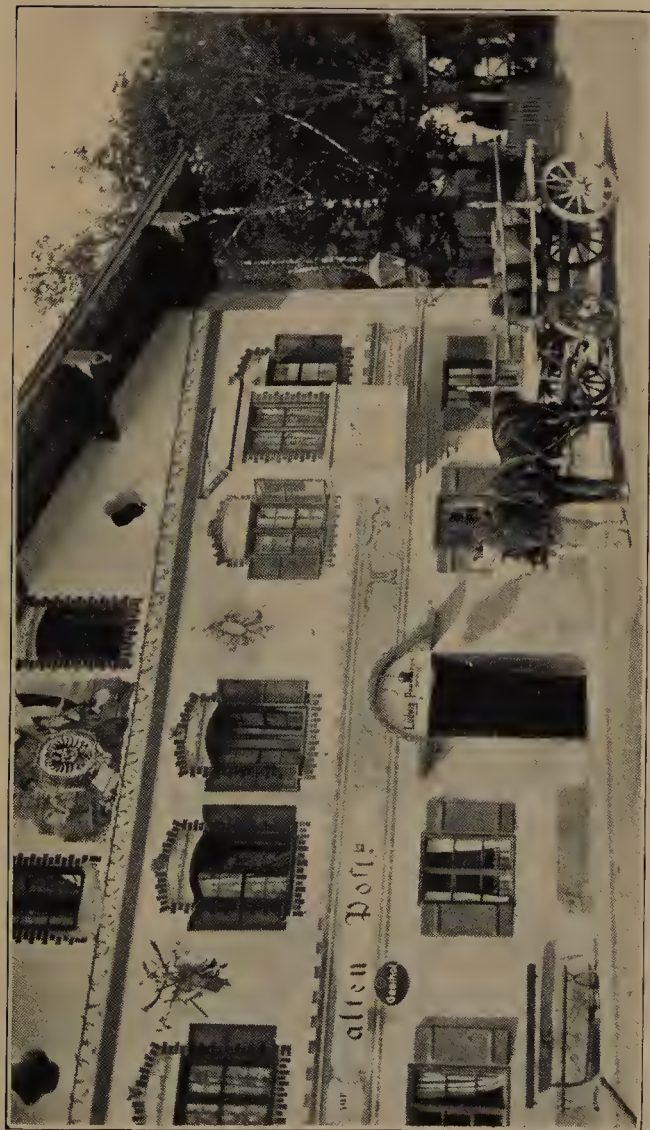
yard had been quitted for  
The staging of  
the Mysteries. ampler spaces, there was no

fixed platform or stage. Each guild exhibited its Mystery upon a moveable scaffold or "pageant," of which the lower part was enclosed with curtains and served as a dressing-room, while the upper stage, to which the players ascended through

trapdoors, was open at its front, and sometimes on two sides also, and displayed the action of the piece. Those who witnessed the Fulham Pageant will remember that the stage was drawn on by oxen. Sometimes the luckless journeymen of the guild supplied the place of oxen or horses, as the stage was drawn from place to place.

At first the stations were assigned by the authorities, afterwards the players were allowed to perform their Mysteries opposite the houses of those who were willing to pay for the privilege. Each guild visited all the stations in regular order, so that the audience was distributed between the stations, and he who remained at one station saw the whole play gone through by the various guilds or companies, each pageant arriving and departing in its turn. Round the "pageant" the guildsmen were stationed to keep order in the crowd, and sometimes some of the performers took their place on the ground in front of the actual stage. The dresses and "properties" were often rich and costly, and pageant-houses were hired in which they might be stored away when not in use. Before the performances a crier went round to announce the event, and those who came to witness them were forbidden to bear arms.

The machinery and scenery were of the simplest type, for the citizens were not



A VILLAGE INN.

[To face p. 88.



critical, and were as ready to exercise their imagination as their descendants in the days of the Elizabethan drama, for whom a printed notice sufficed indicating that a house or a forest was to be imagined. The female parts were often played by men, who wore not only suitable dresses, but appropriate masks, as appears by the entry in the inventory of the properties of a Guildford Play, "Seventeen virgins' heads."

The terms Mystery, Miracle Play, and Morality are often loosely employed as if they were synonymous. Strictly

|               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Mystery.      | speaking, the term Miracle Play |
| Miracle Play. | connotes a drama founded upon   |
| Morality.     | the life and miracles of some   |

saint. A Mystery is a play based upon the Bible narrative, and under this head the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play would fall. A Morality is "an allegorical drama in which abstract qualities are represented upon the stage." Of such is the play "Everyman," which we have had many opportunities of witnessing in late years, thanks to the labours of the Elizabethan Stage Society. But the terms have often been used interchangeably, and the term Miracle Play was commonly used in England to denote any kind of religious play.

The decay and disappearance of religious plays coincided with the spread and estab-

lishment of Reformation principles, and the perversion of those principles which we know as Puritanism. But Puritanism opposed to religious drama. the plays were too deeply rooted in the affection of Englishmen to be immediately abolished. Their spirit was indeed alien from that of the grim Puritanism, of which the triumph involved the suppression of so much that was bright and beautiful in the religion and life of the people.

An embargo was laid upon the Moralities when they became the weapons of contending parties in the controversies of the sixteenth century. When the supporters of the Old Learning employed them to pour ridicule upon Luther's marriage, the adherents of the New Learning were not backward to retaliate by satirizing the foibles of the clergy and the delinquencies of the religious orders: and they exhibited all the coarseness and violence which have been characteristic of the Protestant agitator from the time of Becon to our own day. Bale, not the least foul-mouthed of the reformers, wrote plays in the interests of his beliefs, to advance his tenets among those Irishmen who were so reluctant to receive him, and they were performed at Kilkenny to the small contentation of the Papists. So great became the scandal that Moralities, and indeed all plays,

were forbidden by royal proclamation in the summer of 1549. But Mysteries held their own for some time longer. The overthrow of the Papal power had indeed removed a strong incentive to attend them, for indulgences had been attached to the principal plays, as they still are to certain processions and local fêtes on the Continent. At Chester, for example, the author of the Whitsuntide Play had obtained from Rome a thousand days of pardon, and of the Bishop of Chester forty days of pardon, for every person resorting in peaceable manner and with good devotion to hear and see the said plays. And at Chester the plays were so popular, that they were performed at least so late as 1594. In Coventry, a great home of the Miracle Play, they lingered till 1591. But the spacious days of great Elizabeth, and the frank paganism of the time, created an atmosphere in which they could no longer exist. The rise of the secular drama met the need of the people for drama, and the religious drama died a natural death, perhaps hastened by the 88th Canon of 1601, which enjoins the churchwardens and questmen of each parish to suffer no plays to be kept in the church, chapel, or churchyard.

Wither, Campion, Herrick, and other poets of the seventeenth century, mention

the Christmas mumming and the masques which feebly carried on an old and distorted tradition. Milton himself did not Masques. disdain to write masques. Inigo Jones, as surveyor of the king's works, was largely occupied in designing and arranging masques, before he began the practice of architecture in real earnest. Within recent years the "Seven Champions of Christendom" still went their rounds in at least one Kentish village on Christmas Eve.

But the Mysteries really expired with the sixteenth century. Their work was done: there was no longer a place for them. For all their faults they had brought to generation after generation a knowledge of the mysteries of redemption which men would otherwise have lacked, presenting to the eye in the only way then possible the lessons which often fall unheeded on the ear. And though they are gone, beyond the possibility of anything like a general revival, it is perhaps permissible to feel a regret that no longer—

"In abbeys and cathedrals dim  
The Birth of CHRIST is acted o'er,  
The Kings of Cologne worship Him,  
Balthazar, Jaspar, Melchior."



THE HOUSE OF EDUARD LANG.

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## NOTE ON THE MUSIC

IT may be of assistance to those who have not already witnessed the Passion Play to have a note of the more impressive passages of the music, so that they may be on the watch for them.

Introduction. "Gott! Erbarmer!"

Act I. "Heil Dir! Heil Dir!"

Act II. "Aber nein!"

Act III. "Wo ist er hin?"

Act IV. "Jerusalem! Bekehre dich."

Act V. "Gut ist der Herr!" And  
in the scene which follows,  
the chorus of hidden angels,  
during the institution of the  
Blessed Sacrament, "O der  
Demuth! O der Liebe!"

Act VII. "Dieses ist die Frucht der  
Sünde."

Act VIII. "Begonnen hat der Kampf der  
Schmerzen."

Act XI. "Der Götter Feind ist Daniel."

Act XIV. "Laut soll es durch Aegypten  
schallen."

Act XV. "Betet an, sagt Dank! Sagt  
Dank!"

Act XVI. "O bringet dieser Liebe."

And the concluding chorus—

"Ueber wunden—überwunden  
Hat der Held der Feinde  
Macht."

## BOOKS ON THE PASSION PLAY

AMONG the books which have treated of the Passion Play the following will be found of interest. Some of them contain descriptions of the Play as it was presented before it became generally known.

- Recollections of Ober-Ammergau in 1871.* By the Rev. Henry Nutcombe Oxenham. (Out of print, but copies may occasionally be picked up.)
- The Ober-Ammergau Passion Play.* By Canon MacColl. (Rivingtons, 3s. 6d.)
- The Ober-Ammergau Passion Play.* Complete text, translated by Miss Drew. (Burns and Oates, 1s. 6d.)
- The Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau.* By the late Dean Farrar. (Heinemann, 1s.)
- The Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau.* Translated into English, with the songs of the Chorus in German and English, by Miss Trench. (Kegan Paul, 2s. 6d.) With interesting reminiscences of Fr. Daisenberger.
- The Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau.* By Lady Burton. (Hutchinson, 3s. 6d.)
- Ober-Ammergau and its Passion Play.* By Hermine Diemer. (Liverpool: Hugo Lang & Co.) A very full account of the village, and its history, by a resident in the village, with many illustrations.
- The Miracle Play in England.* By Sydney W. Clarke. (Hull: Andrews & Co.) A sketch of the history of religious drama.



ON THE BANKS OF THE AMMER, NEAR THE CHURCH.

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The following are the dates, as at present arranged, for the presentation of the Passion Play.

|           |     |     |              |
|-----------|-----|-----|--------------|
| Monday    | ... | ... | May 16th.    |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | May 22nd.    |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | May 29th,    |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | June 5th.    |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | June 12th.   |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | June 19th.   |
| Friday    | ... | ... | June 24th.   |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | June 26th.   |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | June 29th.   |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | July 3rd.    |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | July 10th.   |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | July 17th.   |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | July 20th.   |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | July 24th.   |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | July 27th.   |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | July 31st.   |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | August 3rd.  |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | August 7th.  |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | August 10th. |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | August 14th. |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | August 17th. |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | August 21st. |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | August 24th. |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | August 28th. |
| Wednesday | ... | ... | August 31st. |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | Sept. 4th.   |
| Thursday  | ... | ... | Sept. 8th.   |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | Sept. 11th.  |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | Sept. 18th.  |
| Sunday    | ... | ... | Sept. 25th.  |

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The following is the cast of the Passion Play of 1910.

|                             |     |     |     |                     |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|
| <i>Christ</i>               | ... | ... | ... | Anton Lang.         |
| <i>Mary</i>                 | ... | ... | ... | Ottilie Zwink.      |
| <i>John</i>                 | ... | ... |     | Alfred Bierling.    |
| <i>Peter</i>                | ... | ... |     | Andreas Lang.       |
| <i>Judas</i>                | ... | ... | ... | Hans Zwink.         |
| <i>Joseph of Arimathea</i>  |     |     | ... | Peter Rendl.        |
| <i>Nicodemus</i>            | ... | ... |     | Wilhelm Lang.       |
| <i>Simon of Bethany</i>     | ... |     |     | Thomas Rendl.       |
| <i>Pilate</i>               | ... | ... |     | Sebastian Bauer.    |
| <i>Herod</i>                | ... | ... | ... | Hans Mayr.          |
| <i>Caiaphas</i>             | ... | ... |     | Gregor Breitsamter. |
| <i>Annas</i>                | ... | ... |     | Sebastian Lang.     |
| <i>Nathaniel the Priest</i> |     |     |     | Rupert Breitsamter. |
| <i>Lazarus</i>              | ... | ... |     | Richard Lang.       |
| <i>Simon the Cyrenian</i>   |     |     |     | Andreas Kratz.      |
| <i>Mary Magdalene</i>       | ... |     | ... | Maria Mayer.        |
| <i>Martha</i>               | ... | ... |     | Victoria Bauer.     |
| <i>Selpha</i>               | ... | ... | ... | Peter Nairz.        |
| <i>Prologue-Declamator</i>  |     |     |     | Anton Lechner.      |
| <i>Leader of the Chorus</i> |     |     | ... | Jacob Rutz.         |

The Play will be under the direction of Ludwig Lang, with Hans Mayr as Assistant Director.

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